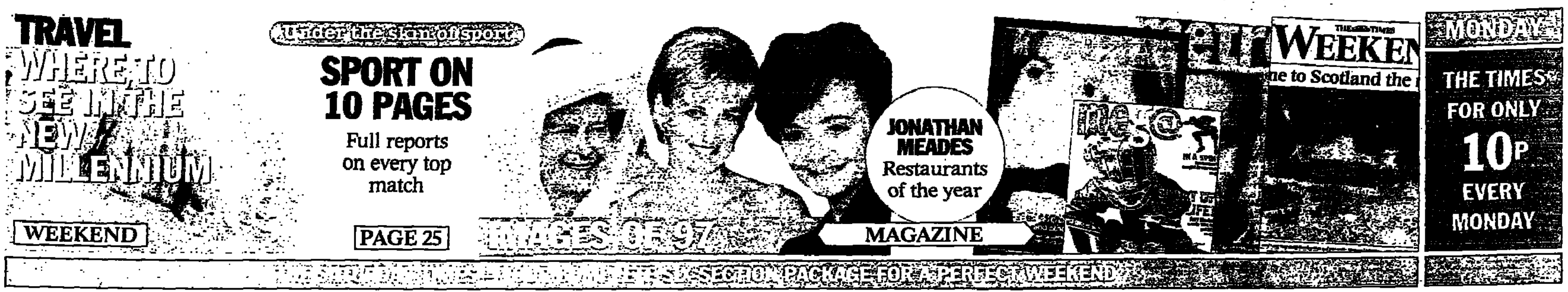
THE TIMES
50P

No. 66,083
SATURDAY DECEMBER 27 1997
http://www.the-times.co.uk



TRAVEL
WHERE TO SEE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM
WEEKEND

Under the skin of sport
SPORT ON 10 PAGES
Full reports on every top match
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IMAGES OF 97

JONATHAN MEADES
Restaurants of the year
MAGAZINE

MONDAY
THE TIMES FOR ONLY 10P EVERY MONDAY

THE SATURDAY TIMES — [illegible] SIX-SECTION PACKAGE FOR A PERFECT WEEKEND

Cook may quit Cabinet to run as Scots PM

By Philip Webster, political editor

ROBIN COOK, the Foreign Secretary, is considering running for the post of Scotland's First Minister — effectively Prime Minister north of the border — after the Scottish parliament is elected in 1999.

His decision will have key implications for Tony Blair's first serious Cabinet reshuffle, to be carried out next spring or in early summer.

Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary has long been regarded as the hot favourite for the job of heading the first Scottish government. But Mr Cook was said by senior aides yesterday to be seriously considering the matter, and has not made up his mind.

The two had a private dinner two weeks ago, but suggestions that they had done a deal were discounted by sources close to Mr Cook. "It was more a meeting about how they could handle the inevitable speculation that would arise," an aide said.

If Mr Cook were to decide to opt for the job, he would be expected to resign from the Cabinet next summer to prepare for the Scottish elections. Friends said that he would make his decision over the next few months. One said he believed the odds were on Mr Cook staying at Westminster, "but I could easily be wrong".

The Foreign Secretary would be the dream candidate of the Labour Left in Scotland and there are suspicions that he would relish the opportunity to challenge the tight financial rein that Gordon Brown is expected to exercise over the parliament. Some of his closest friends, however, say that he is enjoying the job of Foreign Secretary and has never abandoned his ambition to lead the Labour Party.

Ministers will be surprised by Mr Cook's decision to leave open the prospect of a move to Scotland. His decision will determine the shape of Mr Blair's first big reshuffle.

If Mr Cook decided to go for the Scottish job, it would mean a wide-ranging reshuffle, and a promotion for someone to the third most powerful job in the Government after the Prime Minister's and Chancellor of the Exchequer's.

The disclosure that Mr Cook is considering abandoning Westminster to forge a new career in Scotland came as a survey showed little interest among his colleagues to join him at Edinburgh. Just over a dozen MPs were prepared to say they would put themselves forward for the new Scottish parliament, *The Scotsman*, which conducted the survey, reported.

The survey, in which 62 of the 72 Scottish MPs were interviewed, showed that many were staying south of the border because their areas of interest would remain within Westminster's remit.

In his reshuffle, the Prime Minister plans to bring at least four newcomers into the Cabinet. He intends to give the present team about a year and then make changes.

Mr Blair is expected to bring into the Cabinet Peter Mandelson, his leading adviser and Minister without Portfolio, and Stephen Byers, the modernising Education Minister, who has made a mark in his first year.

Other front-running candidates for promotion are Tessa Jowell, the Health Minister, who took much of the flak for the Government in the Formula One sponsorship row but still came away with a satisfactory deal from Europe; Alan Milburn, another Health Minister whose Green Paper on the future structuring of the service was well received; and Hilary Armstrong, the Local Government Minister.

If Mr Blair wanted to promote from the Left, he could advance Michael Meacher, whose quietly efficient performance as Environment Minister has been hailed by Cabinet ministers.

Mr Mandelson is expected to be put into a job where he can retain the responsibility for the Millennium Dome, one of the trickiest tasks in the Government.

For that reason he may again be denied his wish for a big departmental brief and instead be promoted within the Cabinet Office to the post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, held now by David Clark, who has been fighting a rearguard campaign against demotion.

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MARTIN BEDDALL

A confrontation between a member of the Bicester Hunt and anti-blood sports activists yesterday. Despite widespread protests, threatened attacks by extremists did not materialise

Hunters saddle up for show of defiance

By Daniel McGrory

HUNTSMEN and their supporters turned out in near record numbers yesterday to defend their traditional Boxing Day meets and defy protesters who predicted this would be the last year that it would be legal to ride to hounds.

Threatened attacks from extremist saboteurs did not materialise, although there were noisy protests at many of the 280 meets and in Wales huntsmen claimed that seven of their hounds had been poisoned.

The League Against Cruel Sports and other anti-blood sport groups insisted they were not involved in the incident involving the Tredegar Farmers' Pack hounds.

Protesters said they were determined to avoid any violent confrontations for fear of alienating public opinion. They said they were confident that hunting would be banned before 2000.

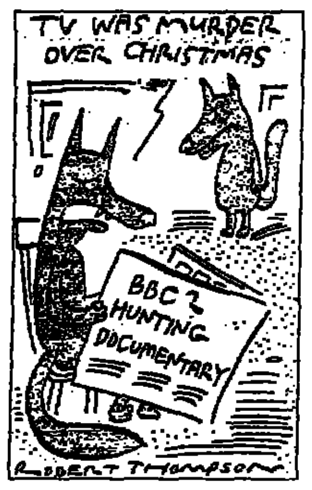
The British Field Sports Society argued they had more than 300,000 participants and supporters out yesterday compared with just 1,000 protesters, who were present at a handful of hunts. Pamela Morton of the society, said: "All things considered, it has been a good day without any serious trouble. The hunting was good too." Many of Britain's best-known hunts were out in force including the Belvoir, Berkeley and the Duke of Beaufort's foxhounds though without its most high-profile supporters, the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles. The Prince was reported to be taking part in a pheasant and partridge shoot at Sandringham with his sons.

At the Quorn Hunt near Melton Mowbray, Charles Geary, Master of the Hunt, said he was sure that this would not be his final meet.

"I shall keep coming back for as long as I can. There will definitely be a meet next year and hopefully into the next century," he said. "This is a tradition going back hundreds of years and it would be a disaster if it was ever banned from this country."

Michael Foster, the Labour MP whose Private Member's Bill to ban hunting with hounds is thought unlikely to succeed, said: "I think that the message is loud and clear to those hunting this Boxing Day — their days are numbered."

Publicity hunt, page 3
Leading article, page 21



Housing prices set to ease off

The Halifax believes that house price rises will increase by just 5 per cent in 1998 after a 12 per cent increase in 1997.

A shortage of available properties, which affected the house market this year, is likely to ease as more homeowners decide to sell rather than to hold out for higher prices .... Page 39

Three killed as tree crushes car

A father, his daughter and her boyfriend were killed when a tree fell on their car, taking the death toll in the Christmas storm to 13. Gerald Ross, 56, his daughter Ruth, 29, and her boyfriend, David White, 30, were killed as they made their way home from a party in Gwent .... Page 5

United increase lead to six points

Manchester United extended their lead in the FA Carling Premiership to six points with a victory over Everton while both Blackburn Rovers and Chelsea dropped points. The scorers in United's 2-0 win were Henning Berg and Andy Cole .... Page 25

BBC claims win as festive ratings fall

By Carol Midgley, media correspondent

THE BBC claimed victory in the festive television ratings war yesterday after its laddish comedy *Men Behaving Badly* emerged as the most popular Christmas Day programme, attracting 15.5 million viewers.

But these "unconsolidated" figures show a slump in comparison with last year when the top show, *Only Fools and Horses*, had an audience of more than 21 million.

EastEnders (BBC), which attracted 17 million viewers on Christmas Day 1996, achieved an audience of only 12.3 million this year. ITV's *Coronation Street*, watched by nearly 15 million last Christmas, pulled in 12.6 million.

The Queen's Christmas Broadcast also failed to create the huge surge in viewing figures predicted after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The broadcast, made in a documentary-style format, attracted an estimated 12 million people to ITV and BBC1 — one million more than last year. As recently as 1993 the broadcast was achieving an audience of more than 16 million. Some critics had claimed that the television line-up was weaker this year despite the BBC investing £42 million in its schedules.

ITV managed to get only two programmes into the top ten, *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*, but claimed that it had triumphed by reducing BBC1's share of the audience and providing the top three programmes on Christmas Eve — *Emmerdale*, *Des O'Connor Tonight* and *Black Velvet Band*.

Last year BBC1 gained a 61 per cent share to ITV's 30 per cent. This year BBC1 had a 50 per cent share compared with ITV's 34 per cent.

THE TOP TEN

1 Men Behaving Badly (BBC1)	15.5m
2 One Foot in the Grave (BBC1)	15.1 m
3 Coronation Street (ITV)	12.6m
4 EastEnders (BBC1)	12.3m
5 They Think It's All Over (BBC1)	12m
6 The Mask (BBC1)	9.9m
7 Emmerdale (ITV)	9.5 m
8 New Festive Bloomers (BBC1)	9.2m
9 Flintstones: The Movie (BBC1)	8.6m
10 Animal Hospital (BBC1)	8.5m

THE SATURDAY TIMES
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The best for business and best for personal finance

BUSINESS
The best City pages and full share prices
start on page 38

WEEKEND MONEY
The best savings advice and unit trust prices
in Section 2

For everyone on the move

WEEKEND
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metro
Movies, music and the best of books

m@g@
The great comic

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This story should be read from left to right

By Robin Young

THE customer is always right, but possibly very stupid. That is the conclusion the *New Scientist* draws after noticing how companies often state the obvious when labelling everyday products.

The magazine cites as an example of such dumbing-down the warning on a 500g packet of Sainsbury's peanuts — "Contains nuts". An American airline was so concerned that passengers might not know what to do with its packets of peanuts that a printed message said: "Instructions: Open packet, eat contents."

America is the source of the sillier-seeming alerts. There drivers have stickers on the wing mirrors of bikes and cars saying: "Remember — objects seen in mirror are behind you."

John Hoyland, editor of *New Scientist*'s Feedback column, said: "In America people sue if they do something they were not warned about. That is why we have had a cigarette lighter advising users not to light flame near the face."

Other examples include:

- From America, an insect spray boasting "Kills All Insects", but adding: "Warning — harmful to bee."
- From Sweden, a chainsaw whose packaging warns: "Do not try to stop chain with hands."
- From Britain, Tesco's tiramisu dessert carries the advice "Do not turn upside down" — on the box bottom. Marks & Spencer's bread and butter pudding warns: "Take care — product will be hot after heating." And Rowenta, the electrical manufacturer, advises: "Do not iron clothes on body."

Nytol, a mixture to help people to sleep, cautions that it "may cause drowsiness". Boots cough syrup for young children urges: "Do not drive car or operate machinery. Avoid alcoholic drinks."

Translation difficulties may explain advice on a Korean kitchen knife: "Warning — keep out of children."

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هكذا من الأصل:

هكذا من الأصل

TODAY IN THE TIMES

'People come to cackle, then they turn contemplative'

Valerie Grove meets David Benson, Kenneth Williams impersonator
Page 19

'I was an ugly duckling and now I'm a swan'

Charleen Spiteri, lead singer of Texas
Page 18

Police call for travel ban on soccer hooligans

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

POLICE last night demanded that the Government make it compulsory for anyone convicted of football violence to be barred from travelling abroad as a supporter.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, had earlier run into criticism from supporters' associations after instigating moves to prevent convicted hooligans from travelling to next year's World Cup finals in France by forcing them to report to police stations during matches.

The police also expressed serious doubts over his plan and said that a key part of the legislation was flawed. They called for an order barring travel abroad to support England to be made a mandatory part of any sentence imposed on an offender convicted of football-related violence.

Mr Straw yesterday wrote to judges and magistrates urging them to make greater use of an existing order when dealing with people convicted of football-related violence. The order, introduced as part of the Football Spectators Act, bars convicted hooligans from travelling abroad to watch matches involving the English and Welsh teams. Under the restriction order, an offender must report to a police station at the time the match is taking place or face prosecution.

Detective Inspector Peter Chapman, who heads the National Criminal Intelligence Service's hooliganism unit at Scotland Yard, said that under the legislation police could not arrest a convicted hooligan until he failed to report to a police station at an appointed time, usually during a match.

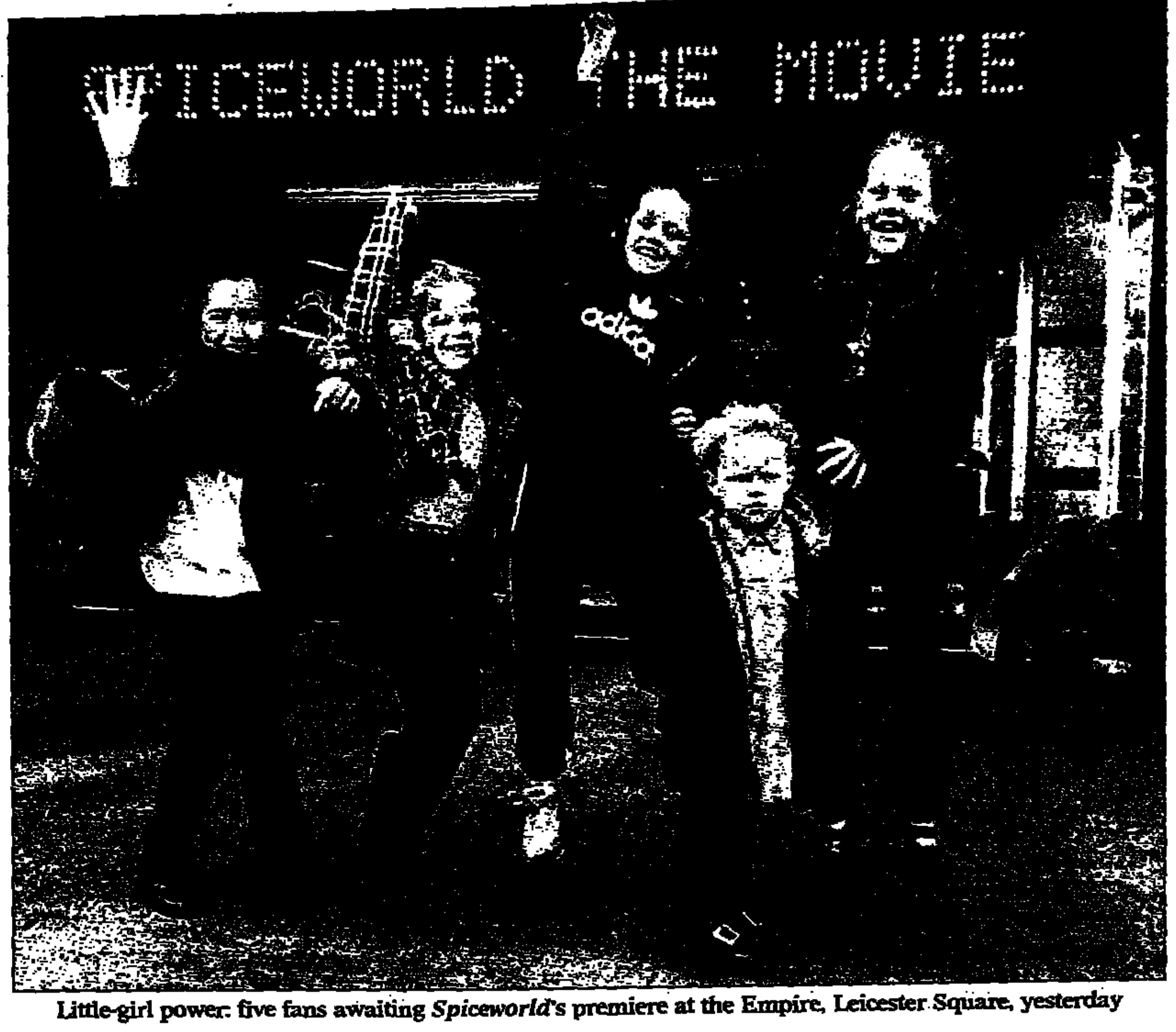
Mr Chapman told *The World at One* on BBC Radio 4: "Say that an individual is obliged to report to his local police station at 4pm on Saturday. The nonsense of it is I can see that individual pass through Heathrow four, five or six hours earlier, knowing full well he is going to that particular football match and can't do anything about it."

Alison Pilling, of the Football Supporters' Association, said: "These new rules will only apply to people who are convicted between now and the World Cup finals, not to people who already have convictions. It is not really going to have much effect as a measure against hooligans and, as well as that, I think it is going to prove to be unworkable."

Mr Straw is concerned that only 10 restriction orders have been imposed since 1989. He said: "It's for that reason that I have written to magistrates' courts, the Crown Prosecution Service and indeed the Crown Courts to remind them of the power to give restriction orders in the expectation that when they are more familiar with the power they will use it far more effectively."

Football, pages 25-29

ADRIAN SHERRATT



Little-girl power: five fans awaiting *Spiceworld*'s premiere at the Empire, Leicester Square, yesterday

Spiceworld adds seasoning to British films' hottest year

Homegrown productions look likely to reel in half of Britain's box-office takings since August, writes **Philip Delves Broughton**

THE release yesterday of *Spiceworld — The Movie* caps six months of extraordinary success for the British film industry. If the Spice Girls' film fulfils expectations in the final week of the year, British films will have accounted for half of box-office takings in this country since August.

Two films in particular have fuelled the success: *The Full Monty* and *Bean*. Both have generated more than $100 million (£61 million) in box-office takings, a level of business normally reserved for Hollywood blockbusters.

The Full Monty has been the most popular film in Britain this year, and is just £5 million away from toppling *Jurassic Park* as the highest-grossing film in the United Kingdom.

The story of a group of unemployed men in Sheffield who take to stripping to make money and rediscover their pride and *joie de vivre* along the way opened on August 17 and has been showing around the country since. Provided it can hold on to a few screens for a little while longer, it should succeed Steven Spielberg's dinosaur movie in the top spot.

Bean, based on Rowan Atkinson's television character Mr Bean, has been enormously popular around the world. It was the favourite non-Italian film in Italy, the second most popular film in Germany and the fourth most succesful in Britain. *Bean* has made fortunes for its creators, Richard Curtis, who also wrote *Four Weddings And A Funeral* and television's *Blackadder*, Atkinson and the London-based film company Working Title.

Working Title has cracked the Christmas market with *The Borrowers*, based on Mary Norton's children's books. Tim Bevan, the head of Working Title, said in a recent interview with the *The Times* that it was his ambition to succeed in the lucrative family film market, which is dominated by Disney. "We are very bad at making family movies in this country," he said. "Family, when it works, is phenomenally successful."

For all the bustle and money in British film at the moment, the optimism is cautious and no one has the brass to tell Hollywood that "the British are coming", as Colin Welland did so unprophetically at the 1981 Oscar ceremony which had been dominated by *Chariots Of Fire*.

The line within the industry is that luck rather than any hard and fast formula has produced the latest bumper six months.

Films, Metro, pages 26-30

MPs rally to minister over son's drug arrest

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

THE Cabinet minister whose son was arrested over allegations of supplying cannabis won the backing yesterday of senior constitutionalists and MPs, who ruled out any need for resignation.

The cross-party consensus has lifted any lingering doubts about the future of the unnamed minister, who has won the wholehearted support of the Prime Minister.

The Labour leadership also took heart yesterday from two positive leading articles in *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, which is traditionally hostile, commending the minister for deciding to accompany the 17-year-old to the police.

Vernor Bogdanor, Professor of Government at Oxford University, said that there was no precedent for a minister to resign because of the conduct of a child. "Even if the minister's name comes out, I do not think that person would have to go," he said.

"The only reasons a minister should stand down would be if he or she had failed in their legal responsibility as a parent, or if they were exposed to ridicule by the activities of the child which made their position untenable.

"But this child is 17. If the child had been aged under 16, it could have been different if it was shown that parents had failed in their duty. But this is different. They have fulfilled their duty as citizens."

Papers are expected to be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service early next month. The minister took the boy to a police station after being contacted by *The Mirror* with evidence that the teenager had allegedly been involved in supplying drugs. He was arrested and released on bail.

Tony Blair's support for the minister, who cannot be named to protect the identity of the boy, underlined the Government's determination to see off any calls for resignation.

Ann Widdecombe, the former Prisons Minister, was also adamant that the minister should remain. "MPs cannot be held responsible for the activities of their relatives unless they are very young. The minister should stay put and be given privacy.

"This rule should not change if it involves grown-up or nearly grown-up relatives. It becomes only borderline when the child is much younger. Then it is harder to have a hard and fast rule.

"But a 17-year-old is old enough to legally smoke, he can drove a lethal ton of metal, and he can go to war for his country. You cannot suddenly say that a 17-year-old, who is entrusted to do all those things, suddenly becomes a parental responsibility when a government minister is involved."

The MP for Maidstone and The Weald added that the Tories would not seek to make political capital out of the situation. "It will not happen," she said. Ministers will be relieved at the cross-party support for the minister, which was confirmed by Martin Bell, the Independent MP for Tatton, who was elected on an anti-sleaze platform. Mr Bell said: "There should be no question of resignation. I cannot think of anyone who should say that the minister should go. This is a personal tragedy. It is nothing to do with ministerial responsibility."

Mr Bell, like Professor Bogdanor and Miss Widdecombe, conceded that the situation might have changed if the child had been younger. "But certainly not when it involves a child of that age. This is a time for understanding and sympathy, not for a witch-hunt."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ballot box could be put at the checkout

Supermarkets could be turned into polling stations under plans being considered by Hilary Armstrong, the Local Government Minister, to increase the turnout in local authority elections. But an option for elections to be held on a Sunday has encountered resistance because of objections from the Churches. Many politicians do not campaign on a Sunday for fear of offending churchgoers. Supermarkets are already at the heart of the Government's thinking for its new Individual Savings Accounts (Isas), which will replace Tessas and Personal Equity Plans in 1999.

Troops in Ulster delay

A planned new year withdrawal of hundreds of British soldiers from Northern Ireland has been postponed amid fears that the loyalist ceasefire could break down. Loyalist groups are spending the Christmas period reviewing their support for the talks at Stormont, which they believe have conceded too much to the IRA and Sinn Fein.

Mecca bingo hall attack

A bingo hall in Luton that changed its name from Top Rank to Mecca suffered £3,500 worth of damage in what police said was a "racially motivated" attack on Christmas Day. Earlier this month, the town's 20,000 Muslim population said it was an insult to their religion when the previous sign was replaced with one for Mecca.

Food safety to hit prices

Food prices may have to increase after the Treasury won a battle to place the cost of a hygiene and nutrition standards agency on producers. A White Paper, to be published early next year, confirms the industry will have to provide millions of pounds to pay for the Food Standards Agency, which will have influence over diet, labelling, and production.

Sales likely to net £7m

Sales begin in earnest today, with bargain hunters expected to spend £7 million on clothes, shoes and other non-edible goods — a 9 per cent increase on last year. The Centre for Economic Business Research, which monitors high street spending, said that the biggest reductions would be in the non-food sector, where £3 billion of stock will be on sale into the new year.

Mother's gone to blazes

Fire chiefs in Wiltshire have appealed to Women's Institute members to volunteer as part-time firefighters. The county is short of about 70. Nick Westbrook, chairman of the county fire authority, said: "Mothers whose children are at school would be ideal to be on-call during the day." They would receive retainers of up to £1,632, with more for training and callouts.

See how they run

An Irish Member of Parliament has called for a nationwide ban on mouse racing after reports that University College in Galway had provided runners from its laboratory for a mouse-racing festival. Billy Kelleher, a Fianna Fail representative, criticised the festival, staged this weekend in Ballymacward, Co Galway, as "a Mickey Mouse event".

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Boy aged 16 is found hanged in police cell

By Bill Hoffmann

A BOY aged 16 hanged himself in a police cell only hours after being arrested on Christmas Day on suspicion of attempted burglary.

David Parsons was found dead by officers at 7.10pm in a cell at Cockett police station in Swansea. He had been held hours earlier near his parents' home in the Penlan district of Swansea. Last night police were mystified why a teenager whom neighbours described as "a good kid and rabid football fan" would kill himself over a relatively small matter which, if there were a conviction, might have been punished by a small fine.

South Wales police have launched an investigation in co-operation with the Police Complaints Authority and Richard Morgan, the Swansea coroner, into the incident. Tony and June Parsons, the boy's parents, were being comforted by relatives. A family spokesman said: "Everyone is very distressed. We are still waiting to find out exactly what happened."

Police refused to give details of David's death or why he was being detained on a minor matter.

Alan Williams, MP for Swansea West, said: "The pressures on a youngster in custody at this time of year would have been that much greater but I don't want to speculate without knowing any of the background." He added: "It is strange that this should have happened in a police station. I am sure that the police will be as anxious as anyone that lessons are learnt to make sure that this does not happen again."

A school friend said the hanging did not make sense. "He was an upbeat kid. But I guess you never know what really goes on inside somebody's head."

Penal reform groups have said that suspects or prisoners are often at their most low during the first hours and days after being either arrested or imprisoned, or after receiving details of a minimum sentence to be served.

The number of prisoners who have killed themselves in England and Wales reached 70 this year. Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, is to hold a full inquiry next year into suicides in the 135 jails in Britain.

The pressure group Inquest, which helps families to investigate deaths of relatives in custody, has been campaigning for young offenders to be removed from a prison environment and for the introduction of new "anti-suicide measures". A spokeswoman said: "How many more deaths does it take before the authorities take some positive action?"

Last year 64 prisoners killed themselves, including two women and 12 aged 21 and under. Contributory reasons for the suicides are believed to be prison overcrowding, lack of time outside cells, lack of exercise and bad nutrition.

Rape may be clue to Brittany murder

From Adam Sage in Paris

FRENCH police may have uncovered a significant new lead in their hunt for the killer of 13-year-old British schoolgirl Caroline Dickinson.

A judicial source said that officers were to carry out DNA testing on a 30-year-old man accused of committing rape in circumstances similar to those that led to Caroline's death in Brittany 17 months ago. The former ambulanceman, who has not been identified, is alleged to have attacked a ten-year-old girl after breaking into her house on the outskirts of Paris last week while her parents were out.

After the girl had identified the man from photographs taken in a restaurant where the family had eaten on the evening of the rape, he allegedly confessed, saying he had acted from a "sudden impulse".

Detectives drew an immediate parallel with the murder of the schoolgirl from Launceston College, Cornwall, as she slept in a dormitory at a youth hostel in Pleine-Fougères in July last year.

Pam and Allan Davies, who are sharing care of their grandson, Ben

Baby slept while mother was left for dead in car

By Daniel McGrory

THE family of a suspected "road rage" victim described yesterday how she was left for dead with severe head injuries while her five-month-old son lay asleep on the back seat of her car.

Police last night charged three people, including a 24-year-old woman, over the attack on Christmas Eve. All three will appear before a special magistrates' court later today.

Joanne Davies's parents left her bedside in the intensive care ward yesterday to help police to appeal for more witnesses to the attack.

Allan and Pam Davies said that their grandson, Ben, was left on the back seat while their daughter, 20, was pulled from the car after a collision at a roundabout at Pembroke, West Wales, and beaten over the head. Police say that Miss Davies's boyfriend, Mark Duignan, 23, was also assaulted while the couple and their child went on a late-night shopping trip.

Police believe that the baby may have slept through the attack on his parents. He was not harmed.

Witnesses said that the incident began as the couple's Vauxhall Corsa was involved in an accident under the town's Christmas tree.

Mrs Davies said: "It's been the worst Christmas you can imagine. My daughter and the baby were due to spend it with us. It's his first Christmas but his mother has spent it in intensive care. Words cannot express how we feel."

Her husband, a company director, said: "I'd never heard of road rage in my day and it's not the sort of thing you expect in a quiet town." Both sets of grandparents are sharing the duty of looking after the baby while her boyfriend remained at the hospital.

Detective Inspector Roger Hughes said: "There are bound to be witnesses to what happened that night and although we have people in custody, it's still vital that anyone who might have seen something comes forward."

Miss Davies, who had worked at a playgroup before having her child, was taken to Withybush General Hospital in Haverfordwest, but transferred to a specialist head injuries unit 60 miles away. She was yesterday in a "critical but stable" condition after undergoing emergency surgery at Morriston Hospital in Swansea.

Police last night charged Shane Doyle, 26, with the attempted murder of Miss Davies, attempting to pevert the course of justice and assualting Mr Duignan. Christine Reily, 24, was charged with assisting offenders and attempting to pevert the course of justice. Simon Evans, 18, was charged with assisting offenders.

Joanne Davies, who suffered severe head injuries in the suspected "road rage" attack

Parents drive off without son, 5

A BOY aged five was reunited with his parents yesterday after they accidentally left him at a petrol station.

Bill and Daryl Collins drove off separately from the Tesco garage in Great Dunmow, Essex, without realising that their son, Kyle, had gone to buy sweets. The boy was spotted by staff and taken to the police station. Meanwhile, Mr and Mrs Collins drove for more than an hour until a radio appeal alerted them to their missing passenger.

The couple, from Elsenham, were near Mrs Collins's mother's house in West Mersea, where they were due to have dinner. Kyle had slipped out of his mother's Volvo while she paid for petrol and, when she returned, she presumed he had got into her husband's hire car, which had already left.

Sergeant Trevor Newman, of Dunmow police, said: "Kyle was initially upset when he realised they had gone off without him. But he loved it at the police station and seemed to be having a grand adventure." He said Kyle was lucky to have been spotted by garage staff.

Foxes out of the picture as hunters become the hunted

Stephen Farrell watches rival packs in action for Boxing Day

TRADITIONAL hostilities ranged across the Oxfordshire countryside yesterday as hunt enthusiasts and protesters each lost their quarry in a chase for the moral high ground.

With a prospective ban lending urgency to the biggest day of the hunting calendar, both sides were determined to gather in force for the Boxing Day meet of the Bicester With Whaddon Chase.

Clad in the familiar scarlet and black jackets, 60 horsemen and women of the 150-year-old hunt were booed and cheered in equal measure as they assembled at 11am in Bicester Market Square, with a heavy police presence. One side of the square was lined with local supporters, the other with demonstrators from the League Against Cruel Sports, waving banners and shouting abuse. The mood among riders was more defiant than confident. A distinct note of triumphalism was detectable among the antis after the 260-vote House of Commons majority last month for the anti-hunting bill of the Labour backbencher Michael Foster. They adapted the football chant "Ere we go" to "One more year".

The hunt supporters included the formidable presence of Anne Heseltine, wife of the former Deputy Prime Minister, who stood watching with approval as riders leant down to receive glasses of port and sherry. Mrs Heseltine now rarely rides except on the flatter terrain of Exmoor, but she and her husband allow the Bicester to use their local estate.

She accepted that protesters were entitled to make their point peacefully, but claimed that her car had twice been vandalised in central London because of its pro-hunting stickers: "We know it is a minority sport, but because we are in a minority there is no need to overrun us. Other minorities are not stopped from doing things which have always been perfectly legal."

Baroness Mallalieu, a Labour peer and lifelong hunting supporter, sat astride her mount, Archie, a few yards away and insisted the battle was not lost: "We have been hearing that it is the end of hunting since the end of the last century, with the growth of roads and the railways. The truth is that it wouldn't make sense to stop it. These people riding today are farmers, they have to feed and look after animals each day. It is the people who have no responsibility for animals who do all the shouting."

League supporters were dressed in a mixture of brightly coloured jackets, jeans, trainers, Aids-awareness ribbons, Barbour-style coats and flat caps. Those waving a banner "The End is Nigh" were angered when they noticed that their singing was being conducted in ironic fashion by the top-hatted Timothy Cassel, whose mount was flanked by others with red tinsel interwoven in their manes. Unabashed when the singing turned to shouts of "Break your neck", Mr Cassel, 55, said: "It's just a Boxing Day ritual. We don't take them too seriously."

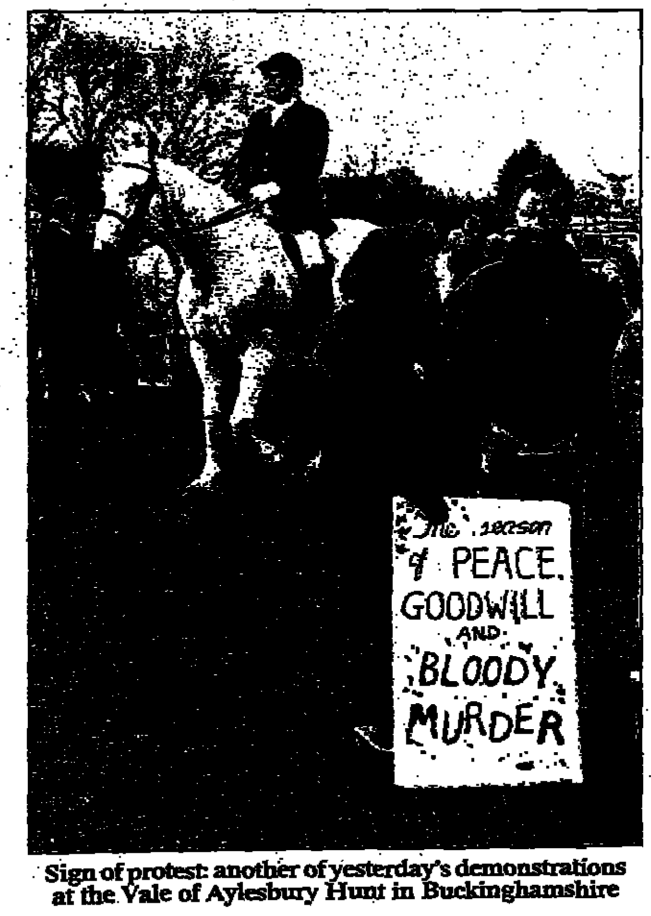
Penny Little, a league organiser, pleaded with the crowd for a peaceful protest, and insisted that her side had won the moral argument: "Feelings are definitely running high. People who hate hunting hate hunters, and hunters hate us, so there's mutual loathing."

In the field, the ritual turned into a convoy of chases within chases. As the riders and their 35 Welsh-cross foxhounds hurtled through fields after the fox, they were pursued by a van filled with 15 khaki-clad hunt saboteurs, the direct-action branch of the protest movement, equipped with high-powered binoculars, two-way radios, and their own horns and whips to distract the hounds.

The "sabs" were sometimes pursued, sometimes flanked, and sometimes led, by two vans of Thames Valley Police, equipped with long-lens cameras, tape recorders and video cameras. In the rear were an assortment of hunt followers, stewards and onlookers.

As the unlikely procession snaked through country roads, hunters and saboteurs alternately addressed each other on first-name terms and made claims of violence and intimidation.

The foxes got away.



Sign of protest: another of yesterday's demonstrations at the Vale of Aylesbury Hunt in Buckinghamshire

Ban recedes into next century

By Andrew Pierce

THE traditional Boxing Day hunt could continue beyond the millennium in spite of the overwhelming support for Michael Foster's backbench Bill in the Commons last month.

The legislation has virtually no chance of becoming law. The Government's decision not to find parliamentary time for the legislation has effectively killed off Mr Foster's hopes of being the MP who brought a centuries-old tradition to an end. With the Bill destined to perish, ministers are planning to add an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill that is expected to be in the Queen's Speech next autumn. Ministers are privately resigned to the legislation not being on the statute book until the end of 1999 or beyond.

Mr Foster's Bill faces a long and difficult journey through Parliament. It will go before a committee of MPs where it will be debated line by line. Even ardent anti-hunt Tories such as Alan Clark have condemned the Bill as badly drafted and unworkable.

A handful of Tories, the majority of whom are implacably opposed to the Bill, could sabotage it during committee stage. Even if it comes to the Commons floor for report stage the opponents could filibuster and effectively kill off the Bill.

The biggest problems would lie in the House of Lords where the in-built Conservative majority would seek to destroy the legislation. That would give Tony Blair the perfect backdrop to reform the Lords and remove the voting rights of hereditary peers.

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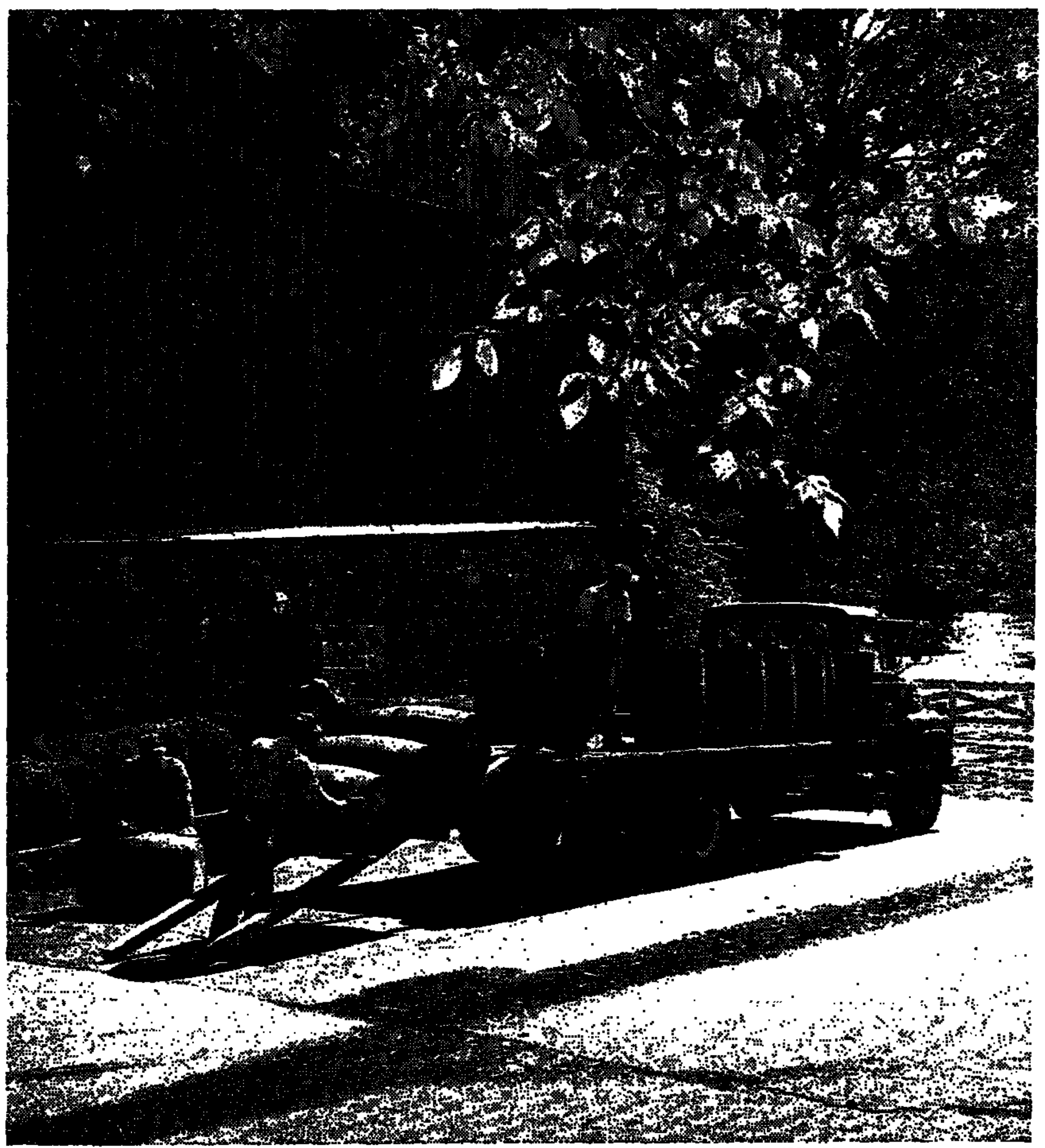

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Model 305. In-store Price £199.99. SAVE £20 VOUCHER PRICE £179.99

3 DAY DISCOUNT
SONY CD Hi-Fi with Turntable ■ Multiplay – plays up to 3 CDs. Model G1. Was £299.99. In-store Price £259.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £249.99

SONY CD Mini Hi-Fi Multiplay – plays up to 3 CDs. Model MHCRX70. Was £279.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £30 SALE PRICE £249.99

SONY CD Hi-Fi with Turntable Multiplay – plays up to 5 CDs. Model N255. Was £349.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £50 CURRYS PRICE £299.99

SONY CD Mini Hi-Fi
- Multiplay – plays up to 3 CDs.
- DJ mix function.

Model MHCRX90. Was £399.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £50 SALE PRICE £349.99

3 DAY DISCOUNT
AIWA Dolby Pro-Logic CD Hi-Fi with Turntable Model ZVR-750. Was £499.99. In-store Price £429.99. BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £120 VOUCHER PRICE £379.99

AIWA CD Hi-Fi with Turntable Multiplay – plays up to 5 CDs. Model ZR800. Was £449.99. BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £50 SALE PRICE £399.99

AIWA Dolby Pro-Logic CD Mini Hi-Fi
- Multiplay – plays up to 3 CDs.
- 180 watts (RMS) per channel. Model AV95.

Was £499.99. BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £50 SALE PRICE £449.99

WHARFEDALE CD Mini Hi-Fi Multiplay – plays up to 7 CDs. Model SYS990. Was £799.99. BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £100 SALE PRICE £699.99

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SAVE UP TO £30

AMSTRAD Portable CD System
- Top loading CD player.
- FM/AM stereo radio.

Model MCD35. Was £89.99. SAVE £30 SALE PRICE £59.99

HITACHI Portable CD System
- FM/AM radio.
- Programmable CD.

Model CX110. Was £79.99. SAVE £10 SALE PRICE £69.99

SONY Discman
- Digital megabass.
- Includes mains adaptor.

Model D171 GREEN. Was £79.99. SAVE £10 SALE PRICE £69.99

PANASONIC Personal CD Player
- 3 second anti-shock.
- Car kit adaptor.

Model SLS221C. Was £119.99. FREE Mini SPEAKERS Ask for details. SAVE £20 SALE PRICE £99.99

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هكذا من الإصل

The Ford Escort was crushed "like a matchbox" by a 60ft tree which workmen, right, removed yesterday

Falling tree brings storm death toll to 13

80mph 'hurricane' winds have brought death, destruction and power cuts to 40,000 people around the British Isles, reports **Russell Jenkins**

HUW EVANS

Gerald Ross and his daughter Ruth, who were both killed in the car on Christmas Day, with son Andrew Ross

A FATHER, his daughter and her boyfriend were crushed to death when a tree fell on their car, taking the death toll in the Christmas storm to 13. Two other people in the Ford Escort flattened by the huge tree escaped alive from the wreckage.

Gerald Ross, 56, his daughter Ruth, 29, who lived in Gelligaer, Gwent, and her boyfriend, David White, 30, were killed on Christmas Day as they made their way home from a party in a nearby village.

Their car was crushed "like a matchbox" by the 60ft tree which toppled in 80mph winds on a country road near Blackwood, Gwent.

Mr Ross was sitting in the front seat of the car next to his daughter. The other couple, Michael Lewis, 28, and Alma Jones, 27, who were sitting in the back with Mr White, managed to get out of the wreckage of the Ford Fiesta with relatively minor injuries.

Mr Lewis's mother, Linda, said: "It was a terrible tragedy. My son is in a terrible state of shock but he is very lucky to be alive. He and his girlfriend had gone to a party with Ruth and David for Christmas night.

"Ruth's dad said he would drive over at midnight to pick them up. They had a good time but were very tired and looking forward to getting home but the tree just suddenly fell on top of the car. The others had no chance because the trunk fell on them. My son and his girlfriend were in the back and it missed them by inches."

Meanwhile hundreds of power workers were drafted into black-out trouble spots — notably in Northern Ireland, north Wales and Cheshire — to carry out emergency repairs to pylons and damaged cables as thousands of homes remained without electricity for a second day.

An air and sea search for a missing French trawler lost off the west coast of Wales failed to find any trace of the crew of five.

The rescue operation began on Christmas Eve after an emergency distress beacon was set off on the *Toul an Trez* 30 miles west of St David's Head. Coastguards in Swansea said that a rescue helicopter found no trace of a liferaft thought to have been spotted in the area where the trawler vanished.

The work of those engaged in the clean-up operation has been hampered by continuing poor weather conditions but the weathermen said that storms were dying out. The London Weather Centre said there would be some blustery winds in the West and the North and rather cool at 7C to 9C (45-48F) but some areas, especially in the South East, can expect some sunshine today.

A spokesman said: "It will remain rather unsettled but there is nothing on the horizon quite as dramatic as it has been over the past few days."

The miserable Christmas continued for thousands of householders in villages in Anglesey, Caernarfon, Snowdonia and Cheshire who were still without power until late last night. Manweb, which provides power to Merseyside and north Wales, put 500 workers into the field repairing lines damaged by fallen trees and debris.

They were steadily reducing the total number of blacked-out homes from a maximum of 40,000.

Forecast, page 24

Christmas lunch is blacked out

By Russell Jenkins

IT WILL be remembered in Rob Cramp's household in the holiday village of Rhoscolyn, near Holyhead, as the Christmas when the lights went out.

Mr Cramp, 54, a coastguard officer, his wife, Jean, and grown-up sons had to beg a neighbour for space in their gas oven to cook their bird, finally sitting down to Christmas lunch in the evening. The lights had gone out at 6.45pm on Christmas Eve and power was finally restored yesterday afternoon.

"It was a different sort of Christmas, all right," Mr Cramp said. "You couldn't do anything. We were lucky because one of our friends had a gas cooker. We cooked what we could when they had finished. We sat down to eat at around 7pm.

"There was no television. We could not even turn on the radio because we had no batteries. We ended up all sitting around with a couple of neighbours trying to see the funny side of it all. It will be remembered as a pretty miserable Christmas."

The Cramps were forced to watch helplessly as two freezers full of food began to defrost and perish. "My wife started to get pretty depressed, but she has cheered up now the power is back on," Mr Cramp said. "Thankfully it was quite mild, just miserable. We were lucky because we had a gas fire. We did have heating in one room of the house. Everyone huddled around."

Much of Anglesey, Caernarfon and pockets around Beaumaris and Porthmadog were blacked out during the hurricane-force gales that gathered pace and venom across the Irish Sea. Families made frantic telephone calls to power companies, often to be greeted with the engaged tone or a recorded message.

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هكذا من الأصل

Dixons sale

MOST STORES OPEN THIS SUNDAY

PLUS 3 DAY EXTRA SALE VOUCHERS

HURRY! MUST END MONDAY

SAVE UP TO £200

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CD PERSONAL HI-FIs

40 SECOND ANTI SHOCK

SANYO CDP900
WORLD'S FIRST 40 SECOND ANTI-SHOCK CD PLAYER
- Random/repeat play.
- 22 track programmable CD.

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MATSUI 103A PERSONAL CD PLAYER WITH MAINS ADAPTOR
HALF PRICE
Was ~~£69.99~~. £39.99. Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd
Dixons Deal £34.99

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SAVE £10
- 24-track random access
- Programmable CD.

Was £69.99. SALE PRICE £59.99

HITACHI CDAS 130 (SILVER) ANTI-SHOCK PERSONAL CD PLAYER
SAVE £20
Bass boost. Was £89.99. Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd
Dixons Deal £69.99

Panasonic SLS221C ANTI-SHOCK PERSONAL CD PLAYER
SAVE £20
- 3 second anti-shock.
- Complete with car kit.

Was £119.99. SALE PRICE £99.99

CD RADIO CASSETTES

EXCLUSIVE
SAVE £10

HITACHI CX110 CD RADIO CASSETTE
- Programmable CD.
- AM/FM stereo radio.
- Auto-stop.

Was £79.99.
SALE PRICE £69.99
Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd

MATSUI CD67 CD RADIO CASSETTE
LOWEST EVER PRICE
- AM/FM stereo radio.
- Programmable CD. Was £42.99.

Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd
SALE PRICE £39.99

Goodmans GPS470 CD RADIO CASSETTE
SAVE A TOTAL OF £40
FM/MW/LW stereo radio. Was £119.99. In-store Price £89.99.
VOUCHER PRICE £79.99

PHILIPS AZ8267 CD RADIO CASSETTE
SAVE A TOTAL OF £20
- Remote control.
- Digital tuner with 29 presets. Was £129.99. In-store Price £119.99.

VOUCHER PRICE £109.99

SANYO S735 (MINI) PORTABLE HI-FI
SAVE £10
Remote control. In-store Price £129.99.
VOUCHER PRICE £119.99

SONY ZW180 PORTABLE HI-FI
SAVE £10
- Remote control.
- FM/MW/LW/SW stereo radio.

Was £159.99.
SALE PRICE £149.99

Panasonic RXED77 COBRA-TOP CD RADIO CASSETTE
SAVE £30
- Remote control.
- Digital tuner with 30 presets. Was £199.99.

SALE PRICE £169.99

CD HI-FIs WITH TURNTABLE

SAVE £50
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

aiwa Z-R300 CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE
- Plays up to 5 CDs.
- 2 x 25 watts (RMS) power output.

Was £299.99.
Dixons Deal £249.99

SANYO SYS850 CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE
SAVE £20
2 x 20 watts (RMS) power output. Was £219.99.
SALE PRICE £199.99

SONY GI CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE
SAVE A TOTAL OF £50
Plays up to 3 CDs. Was £299.99. In-store Price £259.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
VOUCHER PRICE £249.99

SONY N-255 CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE
SAVE £50
Plays up to 5 CDs. 2 x 60 watts (RMS) power output. Was £349.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
Dixons Deal £299.99
Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd

aiwa Z-VR750 DOLBY PRO-LOGIC CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE
SAVE A TOTAL OF £120
Was £499.99. In-store Price £429.99. 9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
VOUCHER PRICE £379.99

GRUNDIG FINE ART SYSTEM CD MINI HI-FI
- Plays up to 3 CDs.
- Mission 730 Hi-Fi separate speakers.
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- RDS digital tuner.

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6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

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MATSUI 28DPL 28" DOLBY PRO-LOGIC TV
- 66cm visible screen size.
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- Supplied with 2 rear speakers and cabinet.

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CD MICRO HI-FIs

SAVE £10

JVC DX-E10 CD MICRO HI-FI
Was £149.99.
SALE PRICE £139.99

MATSUI MCH850 CD MICRO HI-FI
SAVE A TOTAL OF £20
Was £99.99. In-store Price £89.99. Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd
VOUCHER PRICE £79.99

SANYO DC MS6 CD QMICRO HI-FI
SAVE A TOTAL OF £50
Plays up to 3 CDs. Was £229.99. In-store Price £199.99.
VOUCHER PRICE £179.99

SONY PMCD-305 CD MICRO HI-FI
SAVE £20
2 x 10 watts (RMS) power output. In-store Price £199.99.
VOUCHER PRICE £179.99

CD MINI HI-FIs

SAVE £30
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

SONY MHC-RX70 CD MINI HI-FI
Was £279.99.
SALE PRICE £249.99

aiwa NSX-S80 CD MINI HI-FI
SAVE £20
- Plays up to 3 CDs.
- 2 x 120 watts (RMS) power output.

Was £249.99.
SALE PRICE £229.99

aiwa NSX-S70 CD MINI HI-FI
SAVE £20
Was £279.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
SALE PRICE £259.99

aiwa NSX-F9 CD MINI HI-FI
SAVE A TOTAL OF £100
Was £449.99. In-store Price £399.99. 9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
VOUCHER PRICE £349.99

PORTABLE TVs

MATSUI 14VR 14" REMOTE CONTROL TV
- 34cm visible screen size.
- On-screen display.

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GRUNDIG P37730 14" TV WITH TELETEXT
SAVE £10
34cm visible screen size. Was £159.99.
SALE PRICE £149.99

Panasonic 14S3R 14" REMOTE CONTROL TV
SAVE £10
34cm visible screen size. Was £169.99.
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MATSUI 20VIT 20" REMOTE CONTROL TELETEXT TV
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Dixons Deal £179.99

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SAVE A TOTAL OF £90
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VOUCHER PRICE £239.99

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68cm visible screen size. Was £799.99. £699.99. In-store Price £649.99. 9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
VOUCHER PRICE £599.99

SONY 25F3 25" TV WITH FASTEXT
SAVE A TOTAL OF £120
59cm visible screen size. Was £749.99. £699.99. In-store Price £649.99. 9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
VOUCHER PRICE £629.99

TOSHIBA 2877DB 28" DOLBY PRO-LOGIC SURROUND SOUND TV
SAVE A TOTAL OF £70
66cm visible screen size. Was £799.99. In-store Price £749.99. 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
VOUCHER PRICE £729.99

RADIO CASSETTES

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SAVE £5
Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd

HITACHI TRK10 STEREO RADIO CASSETTE
- AM/FM Stereo Radio.
- Auto stop.
- Tone control.

Was £29.99.
SALE PRICE £24.99

MATSUI VRTR203 RADIO CASSETTE
LOWEST EVER PRICE
- AM/FM radio.
- Tone control.

Was £14.99.
SALE PRICE £13.99

MORPHY RICHARDS RC240 RADIO CASSETTE
SAVE £5
FM/MW/LW tuner. Was £24.99.
Dixons Deal £19.99

SONY CFS811 STEREO RADIO CASSETTE
SAVE £5
- 4 band radio.
- Built-in reception.

Was £49.99.
SALE PRICE £44.99

EXCLUSIVE
SAVE £5

HITACHI TRK05 RADIO CASSETTE
- AM/FM radio.
- Tone control.
- Available in Black or White.

Was £24.99.
SALE PRICE £19.99
Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd

PERSONAL HI-FIs

EXCLUSIVE
SAVE £5

aiwa HSG5173 PERSONAL STEREO
- Multi-sound processor.
- Up to 13½ hours playback.
- Auto-stop.

Was £19.99.
SALE PRICE £14.99
Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd

SHARP PERSONAL STEREO
LOWEST EVER PRICE
- X-bass system.
- Full auto-stop.

Was £9.99.
SALE PRICE £8.99

SONY D182CX PERSONAL STEREO
SAVE £5
- Up to 13 hours playback.
- Megabass.

Was £24.99.
SALE PRICE £19.99

COMBINED TV AND VIDEOS

EXCLUSIVE
SAVE £30

MATSUI TVR162 14" COMBINED TV AND VIDEO
- 34cm visible screen size.
- On-screen display.

Was £279.99.
SALE PRICE £249.99
Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd

PHILIPS 14163T 14" COMBINED TV AND VIDEO
SAVE £20
34cm visible screen size. Was £379.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
SALE PRICE £359.99

SAMSUNG 3350TT 14" COMBINED TV AND VIDEO WITH FASTEXT
SAVE £20
34cm visible screen size. Was £359.99. 6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
Dixons Deal £339.99

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One voucher saving per purchase. Not for use with other offers. Branch use only. Discount using Code 4 (Head Office offer). HURRY! These voucher prices valid only until Monday 29th December 1997.

CD PLAYERS

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW JULY 1997
SAVE £30

Technics SL-PG580A CD PLAYER
- 20 Track programmable CD.
- Remote control.

Was £149.99.
SALE PRICE £119.99

MATSUI CDP200 CD PLAYER
SAVE £40
Was ~~£99.99~~. £69.99. Exclusive to DSG Retail Ltd
Dixons Deal £59.99

KENWOOD DP-3080 Mk II CD PLAYER
SAVE £50
- Remote control.
- Programmable CD.

Was £179.99.
SALE PRICE £129.99

MARANTZ CD67 CD PLAYER
SAVE £20
- Remote control.
- Programmable CD.

Was £199.99.
SALE PRICE £179.99

SPEAKERS

HALF PRICE

JAMO POWER 100 SPEAKERS
- 70 watts per channel.
- 90 dB/W/m sensitivity.
- Impedance 8 Ohms.

Was £129.99.
SALE PRICE £64.99

WHARFEDALE 8500 SPEAKERS
HALF PRICE
- 75 watts per channel.
- 90 dB/W/m sensitivity.
- Impedance 8 Ohms.

Was £99.99.
Dixons Deal £49.99

TANNOY M2 SPEAKERS
SAVE £40
- 60 watts per channel.
- 88 dB/W/m sensitivity.
- Impedance 8 Ohms.

Was £139.99.
SALE PRICE £99.99

KEF CODA 7 SPEAKERS
SAVE £20
- 70 watts per channel.
- 91 dB/W/m sensitivity.
- Impedance 8 Ohms.

Was £99.99.
SALE PRICE £79.99

MISSION 731 PRO SPEAKERS
SAVE £40
- 75 watts per channel.
- 89 dB/W/m sensitivity.
- Impedance 8 Ohms.

Was £139.99.
SALE PRICE £99.99

AMPLIFIERS

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW MAY 1996
SAVE £70

KENWOOD KA-3020SE AMPLIFIER
- 60 watts per channel.
- 6 audio input terminals.
- Phono stage fitted.

Was £199.99.
SALE PRICE £129.99

YAMAHA AX-390 AMPLIFIER
SAVE £50
- 60 watts per channel.
- 5 audio input terminals.
- Remote control.

Was £169.99.
Dixons Deal £119.99

Technics SU-V30 AMPLIFIER
SAVE £10
- 40 watts per channel.
- 6 audio input terminals.
- Phono stage fitted.

Was £149.99.
SALE PRICE £139.99

PIONEER A-300R AMPLIFIER
SAVE £50
- 45 watts per channel.
- 3 audio input terminals.
- Remote control.

Was £199.99.
SALE PRICE £149.99

Technics SU-V500 AMPLIFIER
SAVE £10
- 50 watts per channel.
- 6 audio input terminals.
- Remote control.

Was £179.99.
SALE PRICE £169.99

VIDEOS

SAVE UP TO £80

Panasonic NVHD620B NICAM STEREO VIDEO WITH VIDEOPLUS
- Extended play.
- Auto set-up.
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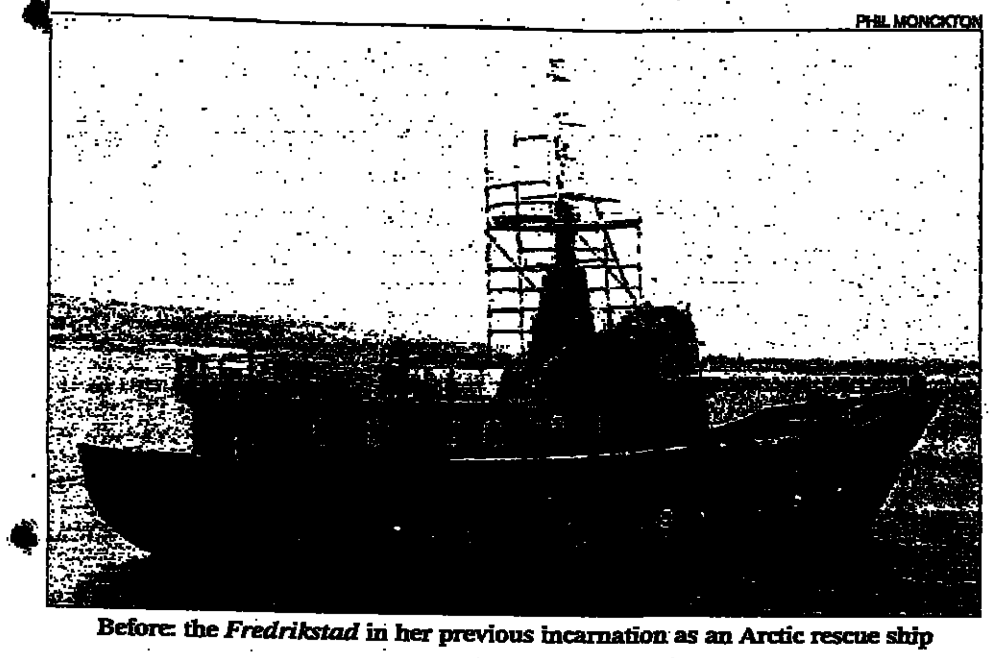
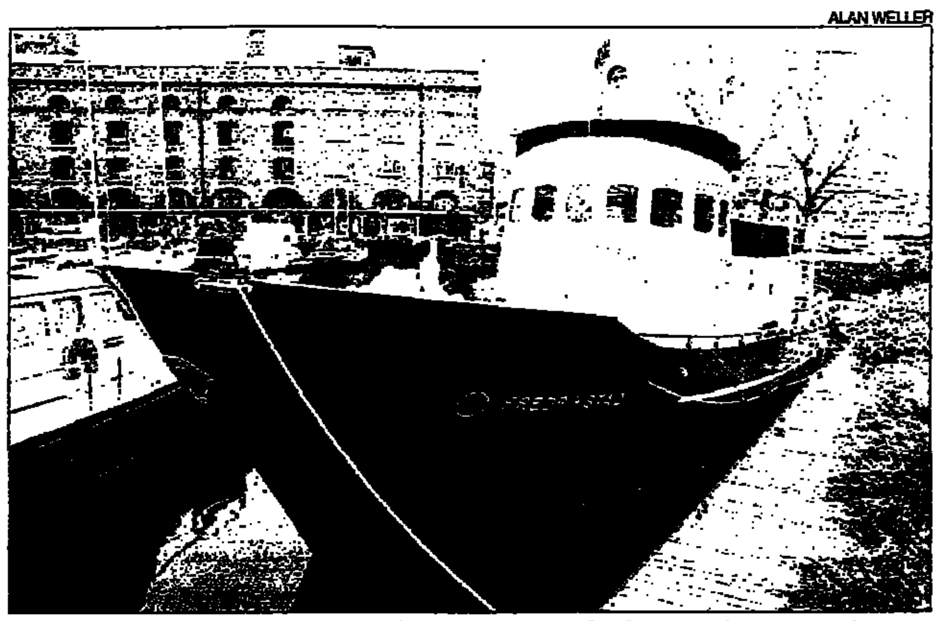

PHIL MONCKTON

Before: the *Fredrikstad* in her previous incarnation as an Arctic rescue ship

Forget gin palaces, convert an icebreaker

Simon de Bruxelles sees the latest in 'off-road' ocean-going luxury

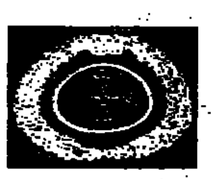

ALAN WELLER

After: the converted *Fredrikstad* moored at St Katherine's Dock, East London

THEY are the yacht world's equivalent of the off-road vehicle: former tugs, icebreakers and weather ships converted into go-anywhere vessels in which their owners can explore the back-waters of the world.

Beneath the rough and ready exterior is likely to be an interior fit to grace the most ostentatious floating gin palace. But unlike their flashier counterparts, the super-rich pioneers of the latest trend in yachting would rather not draw attention to themselves.

They steer clear of the crowded marinas of St Tropez, Monaco and Portofino and set sail instead to more exotic destinations where it can be dangerous to attract the wrong sort of attention. Besides the threat from pirates, despots or envious locals, there is always the risk of scratching the paint: A paint job on a superyacht can cost between £2 million and £3.5 million.



John Hughes, a broker who specialises in what he calls the adventure or explorer yachts, said: "If you are skipper of a boat like that, you're not going to risk scratching it or getting the topsides dirty by using a commercial harbour. But if you go to many parts of the world that is the only option available.

"With a former commercial vessel it is not only likely to be far more rugged and seaworthy, it doesn't stick out like a sore thumb."

In the past year at least two ocean-going tugs, a former government weathership and four Dutch pilot vessels have been bought for conversion into the nautical version of a custom-built Range Rover. The cost, however, not to mention the astronomical expense of everything from crew to mooring fees, means that even recipients of this year's record City bonuses cruising the Earl's Court Boat Show, which opens on January 9, are likely to find it beyond their means.

Mr Hughes said: "These are the people who own the banks, not the ones who work for them.

"You might get the vessel for £200,000 but then have to spend a couple of million converting it. But you are getting a whole hunk of steel for your money and for a superyacht it's a bargain. These vessels have lots of interior space to keep the owner's toys as well as plenty of accommodation. There may be a helicopter, a sail boat or a jet-ski inside but no one would ever know it. One I know of has the owner's seaplane in the hold."

A former Norwegian icebreaker that spent her first 20 years with the Norwegian Life Boat Association rescuing trawlers from the ice floes of the Arctic Circle is among the latest conversions. The *Fredrikstad*, now moored at St Katherine's Dock in Wapping, East London, is credited with saving 623 vessels during her career. Her reward was to be completely gutted and transformed with gold fittings, mahogany panelling, television and CD player in every cabin, a Jacuzzi on the foredeck and a price tag of about £2 million.

The shipyard that carried out the work says clients who have ordered similar conversions have subsequently specified a less glossy paint finish in order not to advertise their wealth unnecessarily.

Jonathan Beckett, the managing director of the brokers Nigel Burgess Ltd, which specialises in the sale and charter of luxury yachts including the *Fredrikstad*, said: "There is a growing market for this sort of 'off-road' vessel, albeit a small one. There is a definite interest in buying the Land Rover or Range Rover type of yacht."

He says it is unlikely there will be any evidence of this trend at the Boat Show. "A 50 ft yacht is a big boat at the Boat Show. But boats like that go on board the sort of vessel we are talking about," he said.

"The idea is you have the level of comfort you require on the inside, with the ruggedness and seaworthiness of the original ship. Usually the buyer purchases the boat then asks a shipyard to refurbish it to their own specification.

"In the eyes of an experienced sailor these boats have a beauty of their own. One can appreciate them as one would appreciate the qualities of a Land Rover and, in very bad seas, the extreme seaworthiness. They are, of course, particularly suited to visiting some of the less hospitable areas of the world."

Millionaire ship owners who want to get away from the crowds are being forced to become more adventurous. Mr Hughes said: "Several large yachts have gone up the Amazon recently and others have gone off to Antarctica or into the Arctic circle.

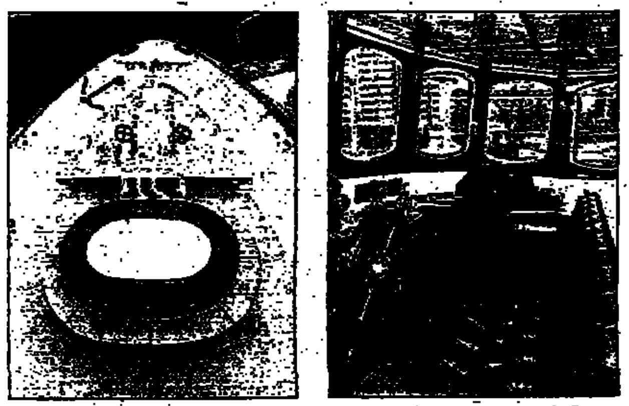
"They might look rather rough and ready but they will take anything the sea can throw at them and all the equipment, such as the diesel engines, is massive and will last for ever."

The *Fredrikstad*'s transformation from rusty tub to multimillionaire's bath toy was undertaken by the Penzance Dry Dock in Cornwall, owned by the businessman Peter de Savary.

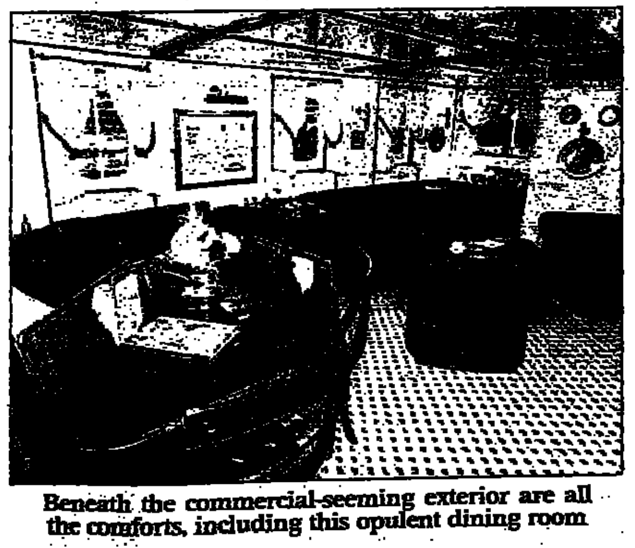
The 16-month operation involved completely stripping out the hull and refitting the 75 ft vessel. Three guest cabins are equipped with en suite tiled bathrooms, leather upholstery, antique decor and mahogany panelling, while the latest electronic equipment has been installed on the bridge. She can carry eight guests and four crew at a sedate 12 knots for 3,000 miles without refuelling.

Marketing manager Clare Whitney said: "It's about as luxurious as you can get, certainly as luxurious as any floating gin palace but with much more character. It's also a hardier craft which will appeal to owners who want to go exploring, rather than simply floating in the Mediterranean or the Caribbean. A big white gin palace attracts a lot of attention and, if you're moored off the coast of a Third World country, that attention might not be completely friendly.

"With a more commercial, rugged appearance the money spent on the yacht is less obvious, more discreet. Obviously the luxury cruisers have not lost their appeal but there is a move towards more conversions of older vessels. We're finding more and more people are looking for less opulent finish on the outside and 150 per cent luxury on the inside."



The foredeck of the *Fredrikstad* with Jacuzzi, left, and the leather and mahogany on the bridge



Beneath the commercial-seeming exterior are all the comforts, including this opulent dining room

PLAYING SAFE

Dressing down is advisable if you want to avoid being mugged in the more dangerous backwaters of the world's oceans, according to Lloyd's of London, the maritime insurers (Peter Foster writes).

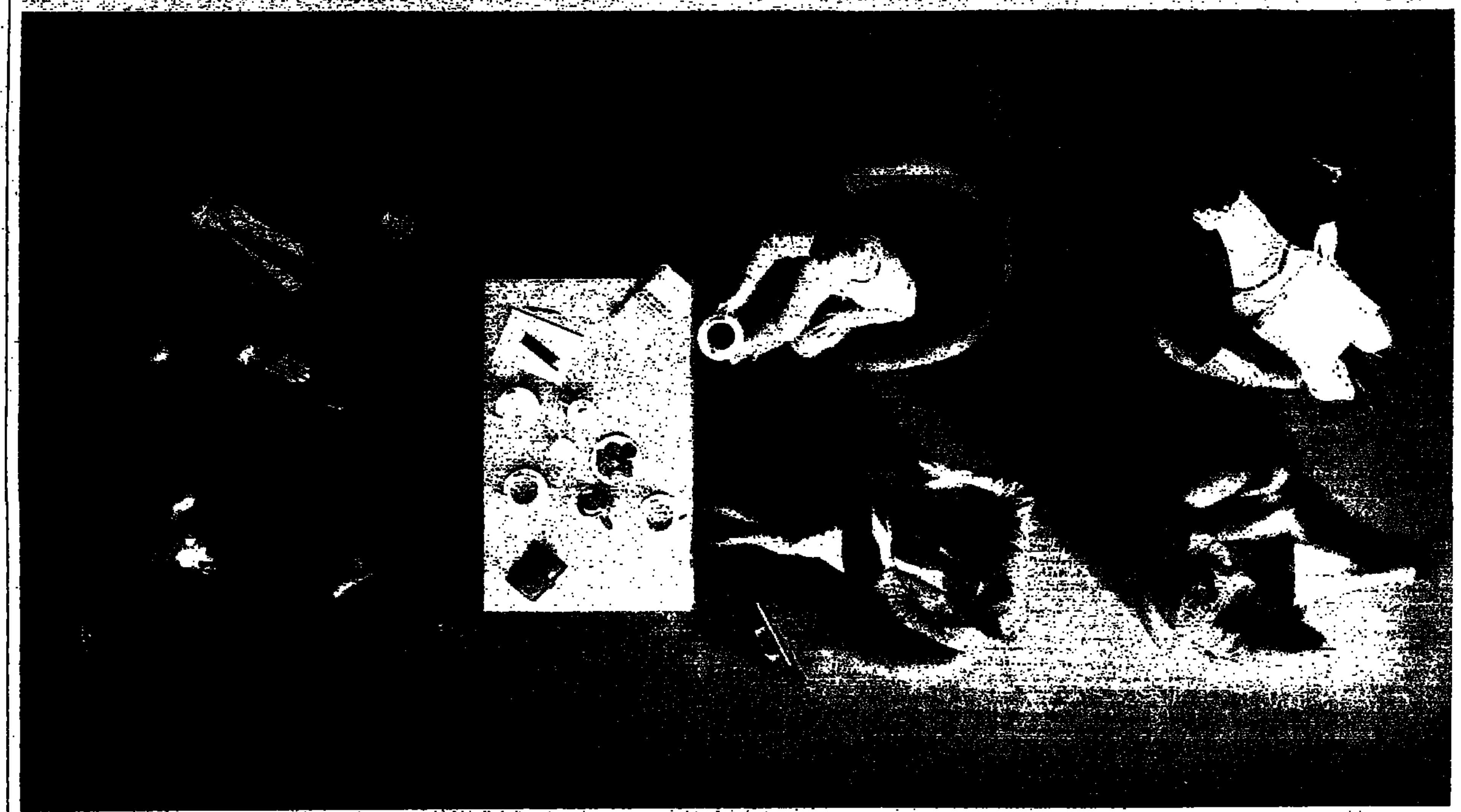
The trend among millionaires for converting unassuming-looking tugs and cargo boats into luxury cruisers reflects an increasing risk from piracy. The piracy black spots include the coasts around Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil, the Gulf of Thailand and Tanzania. Worst of all, says Lloyd's, is the South China Sea.

The International Maritime Bureau, which advises Lloyd's and monitors piracy levels, says the trend is on the increase. More than 40 people were reported killed by pirates in the first nine months of 1997, compared with 26 for the same period last year.

The bureau believes that the true number of attacks is much higher than recorded statistics show. Many yacht owners are wealthy and secretive, a bureau spokesman said, and are therefore reluctant to report attacks for fear of expensive and probing police investigations.

Pirates use stealth and the cover of darkness to board vessels before crew members can react. "They steal the cargo or the crew's valuables, usually emptying the master's safe on the way," the spokesman said.

Although the bureau does not recommend it, some ship owners have taken to carrying guns to defend themselves. This has caused problems with local customs forces which enforce a wide variety of firearms laws.



Is this room really travelling at sixty miles an hour?

"Would you like another top-up?", our congenial host enquired. Smiling, I held out my near-empty coffee cup across the table.

Sitting face to face also allowed the conversation to continually flow, as the Mercedes V-class effortlessly wended its way toward our destination. Stretching out, I had to remind myself that our luggage was securely stored behind us.

From the corner of an eye, I noticed the verdant scenery blur by like the brushstrokes of an impressionist painting.

Although, if truth be told, the whole experience seemed slightly more surreal. After all, who has ever heard of a room travelling along at a steady sixty miles an hour?

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Ruth Gledhill chronicles Winchester's plan to twin Anglican and Catholic communities rich in history, arts and social challenges

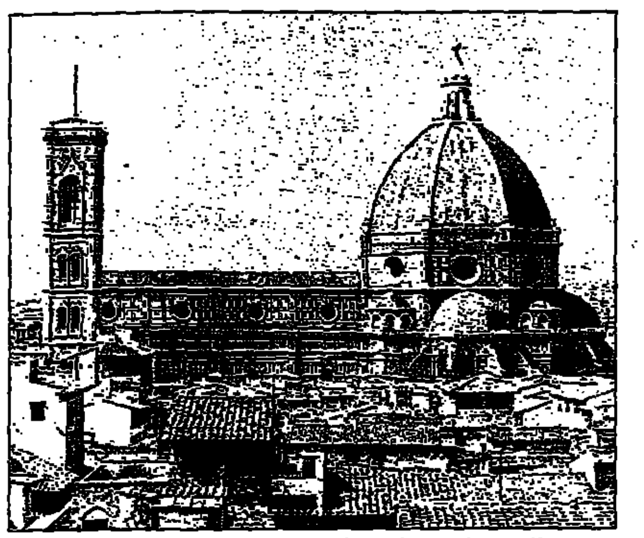
Cathedral woos holy fathers of Florence

WINCHESTER could soon be twinned with Florence in what is believed would be the first partnership between a Church of England diocese and Roman Catholic authorities.

Diocesan officials in Winchester, known for its cathedral and as the place where Jane Austen died, have opened negotiations with the hierarchy in the Italian city famed for Machiavelli and Michelangelo.

Senior Anglicans, including the Right Rev Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of Basingstoke, have visited Florence to discuss the possible arrangements. Father Timothy Verdon, a canon of the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, paid a return visit, listening to choral and other services at Winchester Cathedral.

Most dioceses in the Church of England have links with others around the world, but these are nearly always with Anglican dioceses, or with those of Lutheran or other Protestant churches. Winchester is thought to be the first to open negotiations with a Roman Catholic diocese in Italy.



The majestic *duomo* towering above the Italian city famed for Machiavelli and Michelangelo

It is hoped that exchange visits can be arranged between Catholic seminarians in Florence and Anglican ordinands from Winchester. Negotiations have begun which could lead to the world-renowned cathedral choir flying to Florence to sing in a service at the *duomo*.

It is also hoped to involve the wider communities beyond the cathedrals and churches of Hampshire and Florence, including schools, industry and the arts, and addressing social issues such as unemployment. The two communities have another link: they are former capitals of their countries.

Bisop Rowell visited the Archbishop of Florence, Cardinal Silvano Piovanelli, in June to put the idea to him. Interviewed for the January edition of *Winchester Way*, the diocesan newspaper, Bishop Rowell said: "We were given a wonderful reception. Florence is a major Christian arts centre.

"That is a great heritage that we can all learn from. This would not just be a cathedral-to-cathedral link, but diocese-to-diocese." The twinning would be formally established by the millennium.

Father Verdon said: "We were very flattered to be approached by the Winchester diocese. It is an opportunity to learn from one another and from the historical differences, and about the two distinct religious traditions."

The Right Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, the Bishop of Winchester, said: "It is a matter we are still exploring." It had yet to be discussed by the diocesan synod.

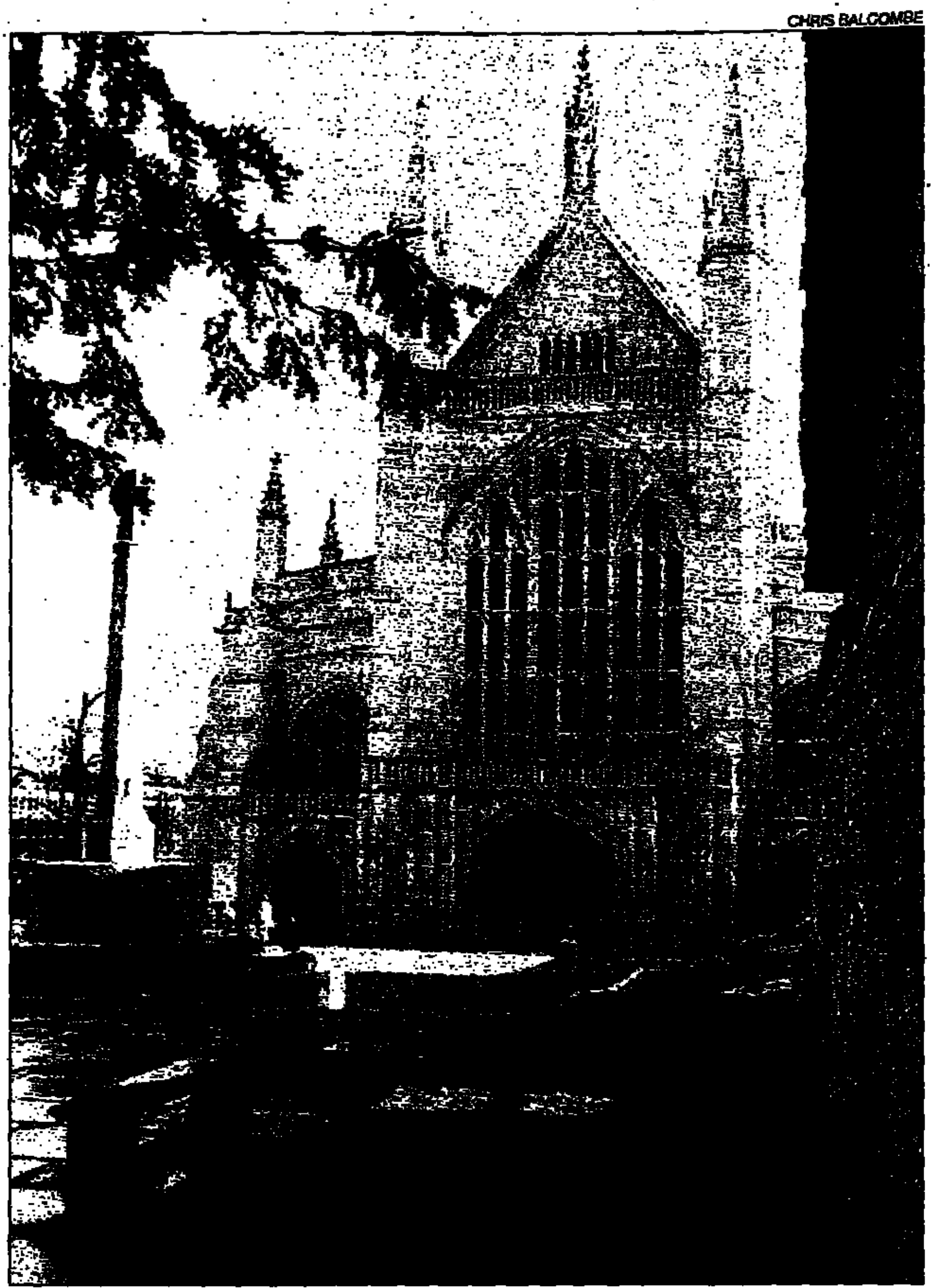
But he added: "One thing we are keen to ensure is that the relationship that develops is not just about artistic and historic Winchester, but will include industrial and post-industrial areas too. We must be quite clear that this is not simply artistic and cultural Christianity."

Canon Charles Stewart, precentor and sacrist of Winchester, who earlier this year visited Florence to attend a service celebrating the cathedral's 700th anniversary, said: "Both Winchester and Florence have been places of pilgrimage over the centuries. I think that is an area they will want to explore. There are all sorts of educational possibilities which are being looked at.

"But there are issues also such as unemployment, which are affecting people in both cities. While we think of Florence as being an extremely beautiful and affluent place, there are underlying social problems there as well as here."

Faith, Weekend, page 12

CHRIS BALCOMBE



The cathedral at Winchester, a model for Trollope's tales of ecclesiastical abuses

FLORENCE

THE birthplace of Machiavelli and the *Renaissance* is celebrated more for its past than its present.

As its spectacular buildings, heritage and works of art testify, it was home once to Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Dante, Galileo and was famously ruled for generations by the formidable Medici family.

As with Winchester, religion has been central to the city's development. Among dozens of surviving religious buildings, dominating the skyline is the spectacular Gothic cathedral, or *duomo*, of Santa Maria del Fiore.

Florentia, meaning the "flourishing town", was founded in the first century as a garrison for Roman soldiers. In its rise to eminence, it was once Italy's capital. The 13th and 14th centuries were marked by the heated battles between the Guelf and Ghibelline factions, involving alliances and battles with various popes, foreign countries and other Italian cities such as Pisa.

During this period the florin was minted, and its financiers, among them the wealthy Medicis, rose to become the most influential in Europe.

By 1528, the religious stature, wealth and prestige of the citizens of Florence was such that during one crisis they found the confidence to expel their prince from the city and formally elect Jesus Christ as King of Florence and the Virgin Mary as Queen.

The city flourished until the 19th century, when the Napoleonic wars, the repeated floods of the Arno river and the hordes of would-be writers and artists descending on the city began to threaten both its growth and its heritage.

The city covers about 40 square miles. Although many residents work in industry in the suburbs, the main source of revenue is tourism. The arts, crafts, opera, music, fashion, festivals and medieval pageantry are central its life.

Through all these activities are woven, now as in past centuries, the traditions and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church, and Florence remains a centre of religious pilgrimage.

On Easter Sunday, it is still a tradition to wheel a pagoda-style gilded cart decorated with tassels and crown to the cathedral, where it is struck by a dove flying from the altar, and bursts into flames, a ceremony known as the "exploding of the cart".

WINCHESTER

THE burial place of King Canute, Alfred the Great and Jane Austen has played a central role in British history.

Winchester was of strategic importance in Roman Britain. It *became a centre of* learning during the rule of Alfred the Great in the 9th century, and the seat of Canute's government in the 10th. *Disaster struck in the 12th* century, when the city burnt down, and London overtook it in importance.

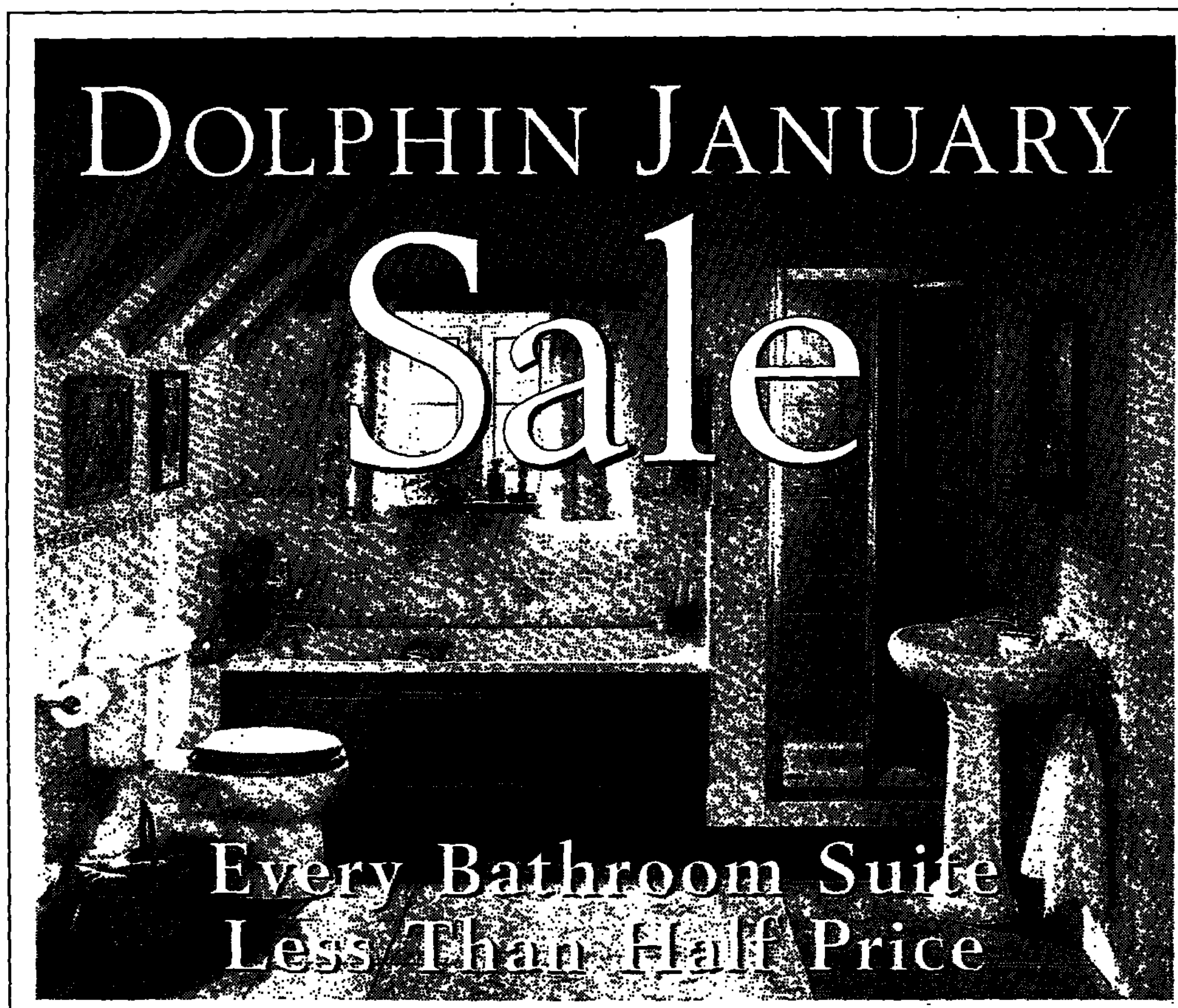
Winchester College, one of the best and oldest English public schools, was founded by William of Wykeham in 1382. Its Hospital of St Cross, founded for the poor in 1136, is believed to be the *institution that* Trollope used for *The Warden*, about abuses of ecclesiastical privilege.

In 1603, Sir Walter Raleigh was tried in Winchester and condemned to death. Isaac Walton died there in 1683, Jane Austen in 1817, and Keats wrote his *Ode to Autumn* there.

The city is best known for its cathedral, the longest in England, with its great 14th-century nave. The present building evolved from a Norman one which replaced the earlier Saxon *cathedral* of St Swithun. The see of Winchester is ranked fifth in England — after Canterbury, York, London and Durham — and the bishop automatically has a seat in the House of Lords.

Winchester diocese covers a population of 1.2 million people throughout most of Hampshire, a corner of Surrey and the Channel Islands. The diocese includes a large rural community, and trout fishing is popular in the Itchen river.

However, the city's traffic congestion might *make it a more suitable* twinning partner for Rome.



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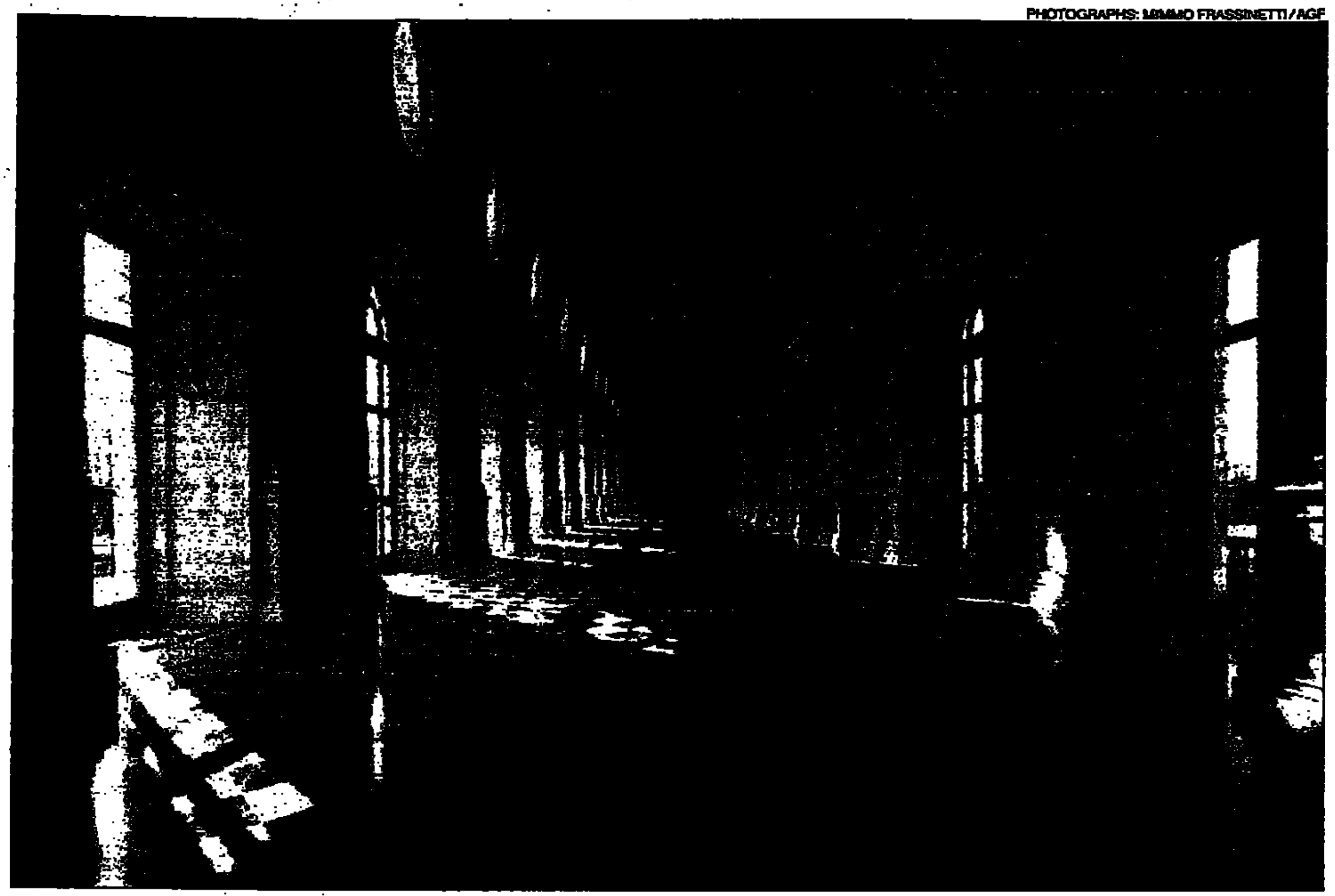
Versailles of Italy will rise to new glory

'Lost domain' to be restored as monarchy prepares for return, writes Richard Owen

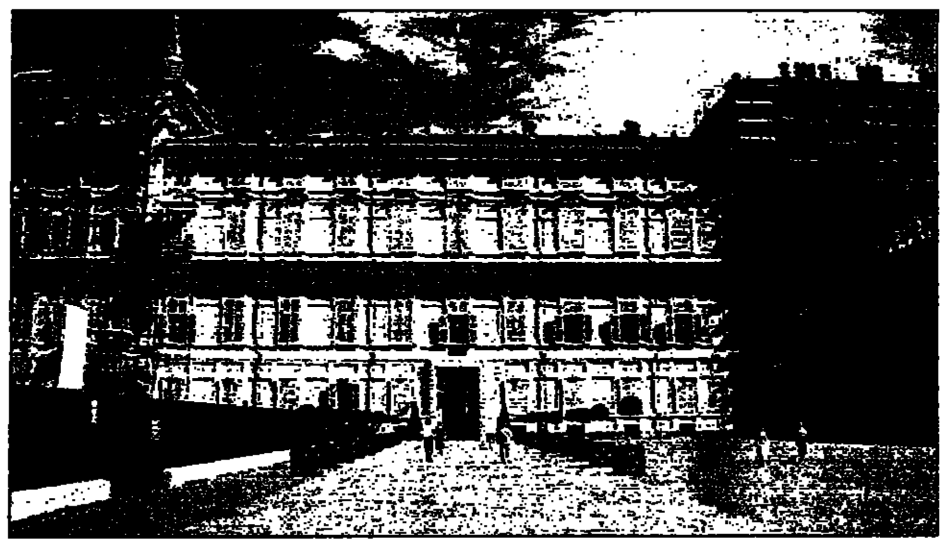
PHOTOGRAPHS: MIMMO FRASSINETTI / AGF



The Sant'Uberto chapel, which forms part of the Venaria complex

The Gallery of Diana at Venaria, left, which is almost 300ft long and is part of the restoration project and, above right, one of the royal bedrooms in what was conceived as a hunting lodge

Veltroni, left, Victor Emmanuel and Prodi



A general view of Venaria, the royal hunting lodge of the House of Savoy

Venaria, the Versailles of Italy and a royal "lost domain", is to be restored after years of ruin and neglect, coinciding with the expected return next year of the country's exiled royal family, the Savoys.

This month the lower house of the Italian parliament voted in a noisy debate to give a first reading to a Bill opening the way for the return of Victor Emmanuel, the 60-year-old heir to the throne. Victor Emmanuel, son of Italy's last King, Umberto II, left Italy as a boy of nine in 1946 after a hotly contested referendum narrowly voted to abolish the monarchy, which many Italians held to be tainted by association with Mussolini.

There is no chance of a restoration. But although Victor Emmanuel is prone to gaffes — he appeared recently to defend Mussolini's treatment of the Jews and had to backtrack hastily — few Italians oppose his return and there is growing interest in the Savoy legacy. The Bill would amend Italy's Constitution, which at present bans all male members of the House of Savoy from setting foot on Italian soil. Next year it will go to the Senate and then back to the lower house for a final reading when an absolute majority is needed for it to pass.

The Bill is opposed by the Communists, on whom the centre-left Government of Professor Romano Prodi normally depends for its majority. But the centre-right Opposition supports the Bill and Signor Prodi has indicated that if it fails, he will hold a referendum on allowing the Savoys to return from exile in Switzerland after half a century.

The present members of the House of Savoy — Victor Emmanuel, his wife Maria Doria and their son, Emmanuel Filiberto — will not be allowed to take part in politics when they return or to seek to regain former royal properties. Nonetheless, the restoration of Venaria, near Turin, is seen as a symbol of the reconciliation between the former monarchy and the Italian people, with the Ministry of Culture, headed by Walter Veltroni, the Deputy Prime Minister and a former Communist, contributing more than £20 million to the cost.

The Savoys ruled Piedmont, first as dukes and later as kings, from the 11th century, making Turin their capital in 1574. They gained royal status in 1713 and soon after acquired Sardinia. In the 19th century the Savoys supported Garibaldi's struggle for Italian unification, with Victor Emmanuel II becoming the first King of Italy in 1860, and Turin serving briefly as the national capital.

Consciously modelled on Versailles, Venaria was conceived as a hunting lodge and estate by Duke Carlo Emmanuel II in the 17th century. The duke was not noted for his military prowess — his forces suffered an ignominious defeat while trying to conquer Genoa in 1672 — but the glory that eluded him on the battlefield came instead in the field of architecture. He founded the baroque centre of Turin and in 1663 commissioned the architect Amedeo di Castellamonte to transform the village of Altessano Superiore near Turin into a "new royal town".

The project was not popular with the Piedmontese, who had to pay for it in taxes. But the result was a magnificent palazzo, with frescoes dedicated to Diana, godess of hunting, and gardens with fountains, grottoes, an orangery, an open-air theatre and a fishpond "500 paces long", as well as areas for rearing pheasants and training horses. The "Italian Versailles" became one of the sights of Europe and was expanded further by Carlo Emmanuel's son, Victor Amedeus II, who became the first Piedmontese King under the Treaty of Utrecht.

Victor Amedeus employed Filippo Juvarra, the Sicilian-born architect who designed many of Turin's baroque piazzas and palazzos, to re-model the Gallery of Diana at Venaria. Juvarra also built a chapel at Venaria to St Hubert (Sant'Uberto), the 8th-century bishop who, while hunting in the Ardennes, is said to have seen a vision of Christ crucified between the antlers of a stag, making him the patron saint of hunting.

Venaria was badly damaged in the 18th-century wars with France and by the 19th century the Savoys had abandoned it for Stupinigi, their rococo hunting lodge (another design by Filippo Juvarra) west of Turin. Venaria declined, serving as a barracks during the First and Second World Wars, with its once splendid rooms and arcades used as munitions depots.

In 1943, the year Italy surrendered, local people broke in and stripped the palace of its remaining furnishings, even carrying off doors and floorboards.

Francesco Pernice, the architect in charge of restoration for the Piedmont Superintendency of Fine Arts, said that although the State had begun restoration of the complex in 1961, only £6 million had been put aside for the project. "We need at least ten times that," he told *La Repubblica*. "We are dealing with 45,000 square metres, much of it in a ruinous state."

Signor Veltroni has promised a further £15 million over the next three years and the European Commission has allocated EU funding. This month Unesco listed the former Savoy residences in Italy as World Heritage sites.

"We plan to make Venaria into a museum to the Savoys," Signor Pernice said. "They are part of Italian and Piedmontese history."

There are also plans to convert part of the estate into a permanent art restoration workshop and to develop the grounds for tennis, golf and riding. The move comes after the restoration last month of the Palazzo Carignano in Turin, where the first parliament of a unified Italy sat until Rome became the capital.

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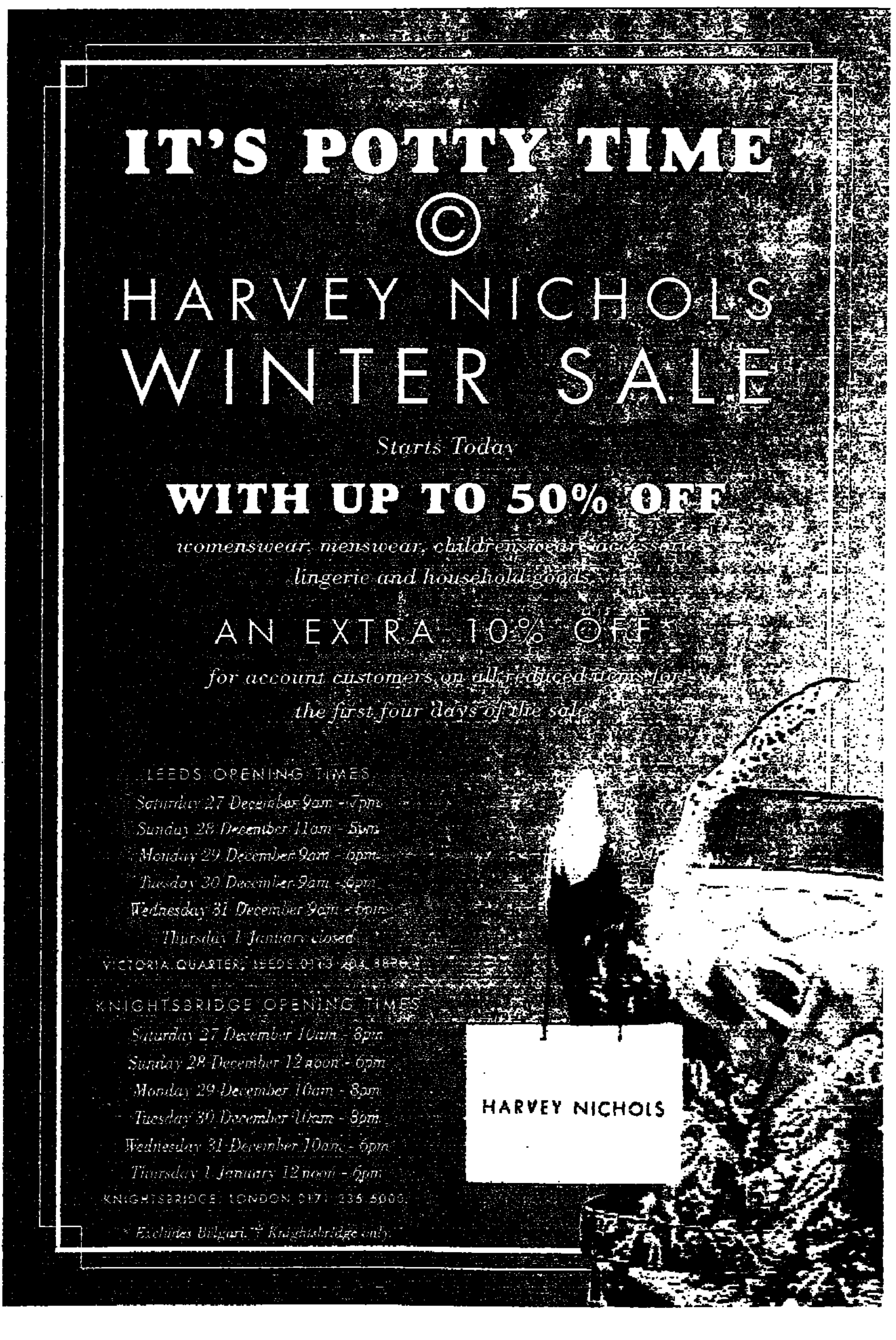

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Probation Service to get tougher image

Straw wants name to tell public that community service is not a soft option, writes **Richard Ford**

Straw: has suggested "Corrections Agency"

THE Probation Service is to be renamed as part of the Government's drive to persuade the public that the service is involved in punishing offenders and that sentences served in the community are effective.

Jack Straw favours "Corrections Agency", a term used in North America and Australia for the probation services. The Home Secretary is concerned, however, that the term could be open to ridicule, particularly as it has connotations of whips and other forms of "punishment" offered by prostitutes. Another name being considered by the Home Office for the 7,000 probation officers in England and Wales, is "public safety officers".

Mr Straw advocates a change of name because he believes that probation, first used officially 90 years ago, gives the wrong impression of the work with offenders. His view is reflected among senior probation officers, with a growing acceptance of the need for a change and in particular for the public to believe that community punishment is a credible alternative to imprisonment.

A report published today confirms ministers' fears that much improvement is needed to restore credibility. A Home Office study of 267 probation order cases found that in only 36 per cent of cases were 12 appointments with offenders taking place within the first three months of an order: only 48 per cent of officers made at least one home visit and in only 32 per cent of cases was action taken on or before a third breach of the probation order. It found that less than half of a total of 406 cases had a supervision plan that fully met standards laid down by the Home Office. Mr Straw has given a warning to the service that renaming it will not guarantee a better public image.

Senior officers are resisting "National Corrections Agency". The Association of Chief Oficers of Probation is to discuss new names at a meeting next month. One suggestion among senior officers is "community justice officers" as part of a "community justice service" and another is "enforcement officers".

Mr Straw has told senior officers that he is concerned about the image of the probation service and the names for various penalties. He wants the terminology used to make it much clearer to the public that the offenders are being punished. He told them that it was time to examine the names of various forms of community penalty, particularly as the term "community service" gave the impression of voluntary service rather than hard, physical work ordered by the court.

Mike Nellis, lecturer in probation studies at Birmingham University, said: "The Probation Service is now much more than a welfare service for offenders. It is clinging to old-fashioned language to describe itself. It must present itself as an organisation that is concerned with the whole community, offenders and victims, and not just the welfare of offenders."

SEAN PAGET

Jack Fleetwood recovering yesterday after being rescued from his smoke-filled house on Christmas Day

Man, 89, robbed for sixth time

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

A PARTIALLY sighted man aged 89 was rescued unconscious from his home on Christmas Day after thieves stole his £1,000 gold watch and set fire to the house. It was the sixth time in five months that burglars, believed to be young teenagers, had broken in and the third time a fire had been lit.

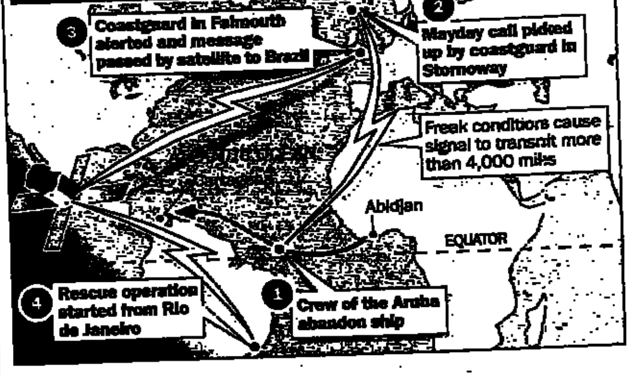
Jack Fleetwood, a retired upholsterer, was yesterday recovering from the attack at his rented semi-detached house in Brierley Hill in the West Midlands. His son, John, said: "It is cruel to do this to an old man living alone. I think it is being done by a group of young teenagers."

A police spokesman said: "Thugs who carry out this kind of offence against defenceless old people can only be described as scum." Rubbish near an outhouse had been set ablaze on one occasion at Mr Fleetwood's house, and at the backdoor on another.

Mr Fleetwood was asleep downstairs when the thieves forced open an upstairs window. They crept downstairs and stole £7 and the gold watch from a cabinet. Before leaving, they set fire to an upstairs bedroom. Mark Flynn, a neighbour, spotted smoke from the house at 5am and alerted the fire service. He then broke down the front door to rescue Mr Fleetwood. He said: "I found John slumped on his bed and with the help of a friend got him outside," he said. "It is a heartless thing to do to an old man who is disabled."

Mr Fleetwood, who has lived alone since his wife died 15 years ago, said he could remember little about what had happened. "It is the sixth time in five months the thieves have broken in. They have robbed me of my pension money running into hundreds of pounds."

THE MAYDAY THAT BOUNCED AROUND THE ATLANTIC


3 Coastguard in Falmouth alerted and message passed by satellite to Brazil
2 Mayday call picked up by coastguard in Stornoway
Freak conditions cause signal to transmit more than 4,000 miles
Abidjan
EQUATOR
4 Rescue operation started from Rio de Janeiro
1 Crew of the Aruba abandon ship

Sea rescue as alarm call goes long distance

By Robin Young

A DISTRESS call picked up in the Western Isles yesterday proved to come from a ship on fire off the coast of Brazil.

Coastguards in the watchroom in Stornoway listened in astonishment as they heard the mayday call saying 14 crewmen were abandoning a cargo tanker ship, the *Aruba*. The ship, carrying 1,000 tonnes of cotton and 100 empty containers from Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to Cartagena, Colombia, was ablaze just north of the Equator.

The Stornoway coastguards alerted colleagues in Falmouth, Cornwall, who are linked to the International Maritime Satellite Network. They then passed the details heard in Stornoway to the rescue co-ordination centre in Rio de Janeiro and a rescue operation began.

Rescue controllers in Rio said that a ship was due to reach the 4,900-tonne *Aruba* during the night. The crew were thought to be safe in boats, although one was believed to have suffered burns.

British coastguards were hopeful last night that they would eventually hear that all the men had been rescued. "We would normally get a situation report eventually as a matter of courtesy," said a spokesman in Falmouth.

The call picked up in Stornoway was made on 2,182 kilohertz, the international medium-frequency (MF) distress frequency. MF is usually expected to have a range of only a few hundred miles, but some weather patterns and stratospheric conditions can cause signals to "skip" around the globe.

The freak reception would not work in reverse. The coastguards in Stornoway were not able to tell the stricken ship that its signals had been heard.

Nick Teal, coasguard district controller at Stornoway, said: "This call was a bit out of our patch, but any vessel in distress needs immediate attention. We heard a distress call that no one else had picked up. It does emphasise how vigilant we must be at all times."

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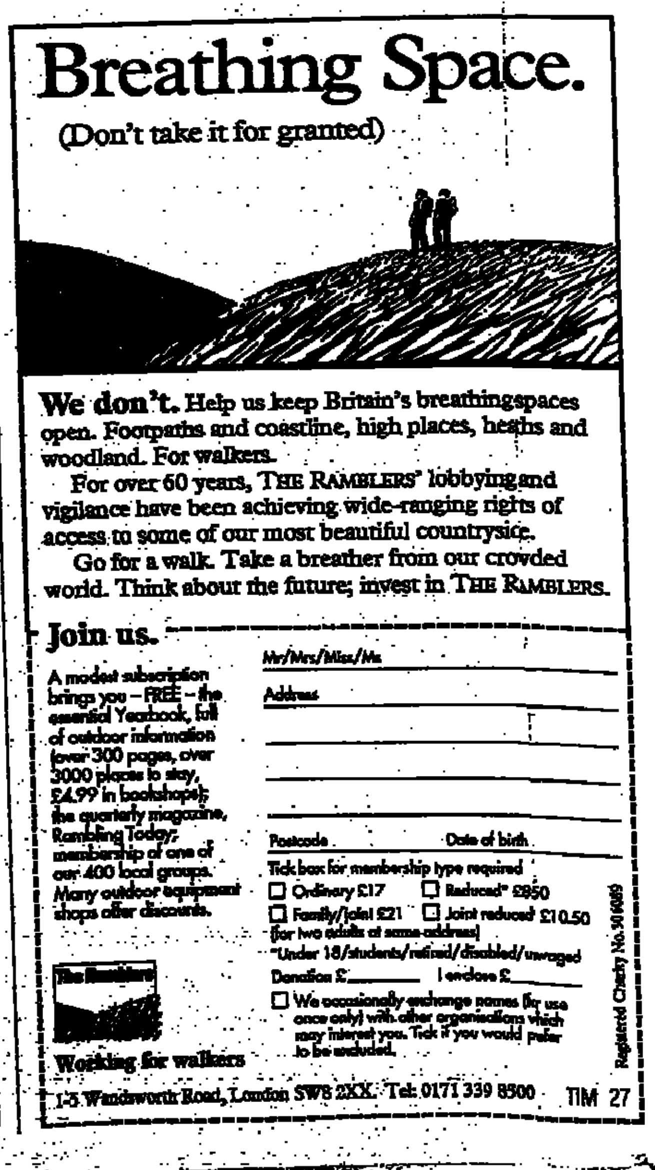
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'Corporate wives' find champion in the gender war

JAMES BONE'S NEW YORK

TH corporate wife who won a 2 million (£13.2 million) co settlement after being "fi" by her husband has plged into a second career as feminist activist. Lorna Wt is using some of the mey from her celebrated dice from a New York tyn to fund a pressure gro called the "Foundation forquality in Marriage".

e group is the political eqalent of the "First Wives Cl" portrayed in Olivia Gosmith's novel and the hit filstarring Goldie Hawn, BeMidler and Diane Keaton.he mission is to start a diaue as to what we mean by ntemporary marriage," MrVendt said.

Ar marrying her high-school sweetheart, Gary Wendt, Mrs Wendt spent 32 years serving as a dutiful wife as he climbed the corporate ladder to become chairman and chief executive of GE Capital, the most profitable division of one of the world's largest corporations. Not only did she cook, clean and raise the couple's two children, but she also hosted corporate dinner parties, made small-talk with foreign dignitaries and attended charity events on her husband's arm. When the two split up, she rejected an $8 million settlement offer and sued for a fairer share.

The judge awarded her half Mr Wendt's declared assets of $45 million, but Mrs Wendt still wants a cut of his pension and stock options and is due back in court on Monday. The board of her foundation, which convened for the first time in New York this month, includes Mrs Wendt's lawyers and her two daughters, Sarah and Rachel, as well as the feminist academics Myra Strober, of Stanford University, and Martha Fineman, of Columbia University.

So far, the foundation's website has received more than 300 e-mail messages, most of them congratulatory missives from spurned wives.

NEWSWEEK chose a portrait of Diana, Princess of Wales, left, as the cover for its annual "pictures of the year" edition. The computer-generated image — the work of Robert Silvers, 29, a graphic artist — was compiled from hundreds of other photographs. Earlier, he assembled the "Marilyn Monroe" cover for the sixtieth anniversary edition of *Life* magazine, using previous *Life* covers.

CORBIS/BETTMANN/UPI

Kate Shindle, Miss America 1997, who caused outrage when she suggested that schoolchildren should be given condoms as part of safe sex education

Ramey: 1944 winner

Aids leads to catfight on catwalk

A SPAT between past and present Miss Americas is ruffling hairdos in the swimsuit set.

Kate Shindle won this year's tiara in September. But becoming a beauty queen in America these days is more like a sociology examination than the old-fashioned catwalk and Miss Shindle, 20, had also to come up with a "platform".

She chose what seemed like a safe bet: Aids awareness. No sooner was the sash around her shapely torso, however, than the controversy began. Miss Shindle's sin was to suggest that, in the interest of "safe sex", children should be given condoms in school.

Her speech provoked outrage from the 1944 Miss America, Venus Ramey, who said: "I come from an era when we had a name for girls who hand out condoms, and it wasn't Miss America."

Actors take Broadway flop on to the street

THE co-stars of the musical *Side Show* can claim to have played Broadway like no one else. Emily Skinner and Alice Ripley have been spotted at the discount ticket booth in Times Square, begging theatre-goers to see their production. The show is just not pulling in the crowds and the final curtain is due to fall next week after just 91 performances. The fiasco will cost investors more than $7 million (£4 million) — the third largest financial flop in Broadway history.

☐ The caretaker who found Andrew Cunanan, Gianni Versace's killer, is marketing his own brand of holster. Fernando Carreira, who discovered Cunanan on a Miami houseboat, says he had trouble drawing his gun and wants to be ready next time.

☐ John F. Kennedy's personal effects are to be auctioned in Manhattan on March 18 and already the question is: will they fetch more than the $34.5 million (£20.3 million) raised by Jackie's memorabilia last year?

☐ A technological innovation in the age-old dating game: the "Dear John" fax. "I didn't want to call him to tell him not to call, so I faxed him," an up-to-date friend reports.

Senfeld kills off his ult TV comedy

ROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

AMERNS have begun a nationw lament after Jerry Seinfeldreator and star of the telion comedy that bears hiame, announced he will kill the show at the end of the cnt, ninth season.

*Seinfe*has been the most acclaimetelevision comedy of the dde, its cult status more thmatching that of such yesyear hits as *I Love Lucy*, *M.H.* and *Cheers*. It has nevettained the same heights Britain, but its BBC2 air attracts a healthy audience.

Intervied in *The New York Ti* yesterday, Mr Seinfeld s: "I wanted to end the show the same kind of peak we'een doing it on for years. ...Ve've all seen a million etes where you say, 'I w they didn't do those lasto years'. For me, this is all at timing. My life is all at timing. As a comediany sense of timing is everyth."

Describ commonly as being abo"nothing in particular", *Sfeld* offers weekly vignettrom the lives of four morally anaemic, intellectually mediocre and physically unprepossessing New Yorkers. Mr Seinfeld is Jerry — the lucky one of the dysfunctional quartet, who also include Elaine, a feckless man-chaser; George, the short, bald "loser"; and Kramer, a man who is, to put it bluntly, nuts.

Yet their comic brew is a heady one. *Seinfeld's* worth to the network can be seen in the actors' astronomical salaries. Mr Seinfeld receives at least $1 million (£606,000) an episode — there are 22 a season — and his co-stars get $600,000.

The comedy is expected to make almost $1 billion in syndication revenues. All this has made Mr Seinfeld one of New York's richest men and *Fortune* magazine estimated recently that his income for 1997 was $94 million.

He could have made even more next year. NBC is said to have offered him $5 million an episode to stay in production. But he said: "This show has been the greatest love affair of my life. We all felt we wanted to leave in love."

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Teargas fired in clash at Moi election meeting

FROM DAVID ORR
IN NAIROBI

Moi: battle for votes

TEARGAS was fired by police at an election rally in Kenya yesterday after supporters of rival parties clashed.

The trouble broke out as President Moi was leaving Homa Bay where he had addressed about a thousand people. He and other candidates in Monday's presidential and parliamentary elections have been criss-crossing the country trying to muster last-minute support.

Fighting is said to have started when some people refused to give the salute of the President's ruling Kanu party. The salute, arm held aloft with a raised index finger, is given to indicate that Kanu is the one and only party, which it was until multiparty politics were introduced in 1991.

The dissenters are understood to have been followers of the National Democratic Party (NDP) of Raila Odinga, one of 14 presidential candidates standing against President Moi in Monday's poll. Mr Odinga is the son of the late Oginga Odinga, a former vice-president who was twice expelled from Kanu.

The NDP draws most of its support from western Kenya's Luo tribe, the country's third largest ethnic group. Marginalised because of their cultural and social traditions (which, among other things, exclude circumcision), the Luos have as much difficulty finding acceptance among the President's minority Kalenjin tribe as they do among the dominant Kikuyu community.

Despite the lip-service paid by politicians to the idea of plurality, tribal issues continue to dominate Kenyan politics. Each party has its own particular ethnic identity, although Kanu draws its followers from a wider tribal spectrum than most of the other parties.

In another incident on the shores of Lake Victoria, police fired teargas yesterday to disperse about 200 Kanu supporters demonstrating against the murder of a party candidate. Oayere Katuku, a candidate in local elections also taking place on Monday, was shot dead on Thursday. It is rumoured that he was killed for having failed to distribute enough of his election funds among local people.

AHMED JADALLAH / REUTERS

Masked Palestinians belonging to Hamas march during a Gaza Strip rally marking the tenth anniversary of the Islamic Resistance Movement's foundation by Sheikh Ahmed Yaseen at the start of the intifada

Pressue on Isra:l to retum more laıd

FROM ROSS DUN
IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S Foreign Mister has said that the Palesnians must be given at least aother 10 per cent of the WeBank to keep the peace ocess alive.

David Levy's coments came after a meetii with Binyamin Netanyahuhe Israeli Prime Minister/ho is under pressure fromie US Administration to trafer a significant amount oftrritory to Palestinian self-le.

The Israeli Cabinewhich meets tomorrow, is oected to decide the issue so, with Mr Netanyahu due hold talks with President linton at the White Hor next month.

☐ Jerusalem: Israel police said yesterday that ty were holding two Jewishxtremists, Avigdor Esk and Haim Pakovich, w were suspected of plamg to throw a pig's head is an Islamic shrine in easlerusalem to spark clashesetween Arabs and Jews during Ramadan. (Reuters,

Spy in the skyis high-tech aid br nosy neighbours

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

WITHIN a few weeks, it will take only a credit card to order pictures from space of secret military bases, or even the next-door neighbour's garden.

The first civilian spy satellite has been successfully put into orbit by an American company using a former Cold War missile launched from the Svobodny Cosmodrome in eastern Russia.

The first signals were received at a ground station in Norway, confirming that the Earlybird satellite had begun operations. It should be ready to start taking orders by February. The cost: £180 to £440 per picture, depending on whether they come from the satellite's normal output or are specially ordered.

Earlybird breaks the monopoly on high-resolution satellite reconnaissance pictures held by the military and intelligence services of a handful of advanced countries for the past 40 years. The Clinton Administration approved the idea three years ago to give American aerospace companies a head start over foreign rivals.

Now almost anyone can take a peek from space. They include foreign governments that cannot afford their own satellites, although the operators are barred t the US Government from ling images to Cuba, Lib, North Korea, Iran and Irar any of their suspected agts. Also, Washington retainthe right to switch off Earlyd's commercial sensors in re of war.

Firms are exped to use the pictures for a we range of applications, inclung urban planning, mapming, disaster relief, oil expation and mining. The medare likely to cash in on oppunities to photograph erronmental and military ces. There could also be a stdy market for spying on milry targets by think-tanks a lobbying groups interested monitoring compliance ith global arms control treas.

Earlybird is signed to pick out featu on the ground as small 10ft across, good enough tdistinguish between a car d a lorry. Within a year oro, the next generation of spytellites will be able to pick oubjects only 3ft across.

There will alse a race in space among ommercial companies fromina, India, Israel, Russia a China, as well as Earlyb's makers, Earthwatch Incoased near Denver and owl by American and Japaneinterests.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Santa carries relef to children of Iraq

Nicosia: An aircraft chartered by Peace 2000n Icelandic charity, and with Father Christmas on board, lded in Iraq, bringing Christmas gifts and medicine for Iraqi ıldren hit by United Nations sanctions (Michael Theodoulowrites). The flight was permitted only after the charity persıed the UN sanctions committee in New York that Santa card no gifts for President Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader. T flight, to a country where Unicef recently estimated that nly a million children are malnourished, was the second i24 hours. A Russian plane touched down at Baghdad on Chımas Day.

Japan party is disbandd

Tokyo: Ichiro Ozawa, the leader of Japan's threear-old New Frontier Party, the main opposition group with members in the 252-seat upper house and 126 in the more porful 500-seat House of Representatives, announced its dissolutı, a boost for the beleaguered Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashıto. Sources said that Mr Ozawa and 100 parliamentarians plaed to form a new party early next month. Other NFP parliamtarians are said to be planning to band together to formseveral new parties. (Reuters)

6,000 Kurds killed in 197

Diyarbakir: Turkish security officials said ththe Armed Forces had killed almost 6,000 Kurdish guerrillan clashes in 1997. In all 5,974 Kurdistan Workers Party rels had been killed for the loss of 548 policemen, soldiers and "lage guard" militiamen, Aydin Arslan, the emergency rule regn governor, said. Another 142 civilians had also died in tfighting. A military source said security forces had killed ninebels in the latest report of fighting. (Reuters)

Jewish graves desecratd

Buenos Aires: Vandals smashed more than 3tombs and monuments in La Tablada Jewish cemetery here Christmas Eve for the second year running, defiling photoıphs of the dead. Argentina, home to a large Jewish conunity, has suffered two bloody and unsolved attacks in the pt five years. A bomb destroyed the Israeli embassy, killing 29 pple, and an explosion razed a community centre, killing 86. (Rters)

Car hazard for penguis

Cape Town: At least four jackass penguins have en run over and killed by cars during the Christmas rush at a uth African beach resort, apparently because the birds hide der vehicles for shade. Nature conservation authorities wereanding out leaflets at Boulders beach, south of here, to warnidsummer tourists to check under cars before driving off. (Rters)

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Chubais at risk as Yeltsin turns on reformers

The President may be ready for a purge, writes **Richard Beeston**

PRESIDENT Yeltsin yesterday attacked the liberal reformers inside his administration, comparing them to their Communist predecessors and hinting that they may be purged from the ranks of his Government.

In a populist statement during his final radio address before the traditional holiday begins at the new year, the Kremlin leader signalled again that he may slow the process of economic reform because of the hardships endured by his people. "Today it has become clear for most people that there have been few [economic] achievements," he said, adding that ministerial heads could roll. "We will correct mistakes and draw the necessary conclusions."

The remarks came as Mr Yeltsin is courting the opposition-dominated Duma, the lower house of parliament, and increasingly is working towards consensus politics with Communists and nationalists at the expense of his pro-Western supporters.

Last week, for instance, he surprised many of his countrymen by praising the role of the KGB in Russian history and suggesting that past criticisms had been unfair. Yesterday, he suggested in a meeting with leading politicians, including Gennadi Seleznyov, the Communist Speaker of the Duma, that he was prepared to dilute a Bill to privatise land, once a cornerstone of his policy.

Athough potentially harmful for the economy, the tactic of switching course has been employed repeatedly by Mr Yeltsin to keep him in power and his adversaries and allies off balance.

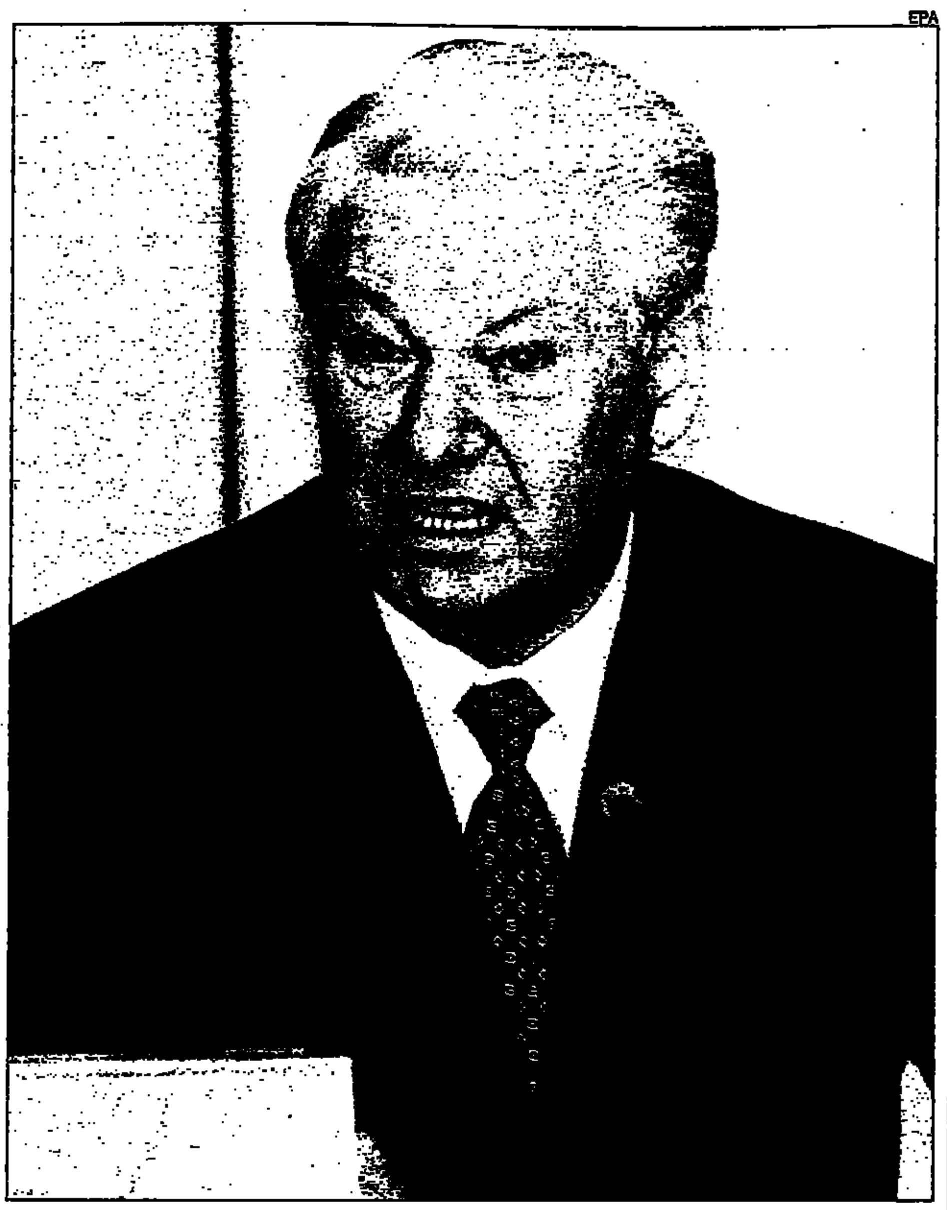
The obvious target of his latest attack was Anatoli Chubais, the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for much of the reform process, who has become a hate figure for millions impoverished during the chaotic transition to the free market.

Although he has been one of the most influential and powerful figures in the country over the past two years, his authority was badly weakened after allegations that he and four associates accepted unusually high advances for an unwritten book. The co-authors were all dismissed and Mr Chubais was demoted and reprimanded.

Chubais: head may roll

On Wednesday, a dejected Mr Chubais told a Moscow newspaper that he would soon decide whether to resign from his job, although Mr Yeltsin suggested that the decision may be made for him sooner than he expects. "[Communist] Party slogans have been replaced by macroeconomic ones," the Kremlin leader said, in an apparent deviation from his own repeated belief in the need to create a market economy. "They first proclaimed 'Privatisation at any cost' and later 'Let's squeeze the dollar into a currency corridor'."

Another possible victim is Boris Nemtsov, a young Deputy Prime Minister, whom Mr Yeltsin admonished in public on Wednesday for not resolving the vexed question of wages unpaid to millions of workers. Sensing blood, the Duma passed a motion yesterday calling for the charismatic young minister to be sacked after he allegedly suggested during a recent visit to Sweden that Westerners preferred investing in Russian regions run by democrats rather than by communists.


EPA

President Yeltsin at a Kremlin meeting yesterday. He may slow economic reforms

If Mr Yeltsin makes good his threats and warnings to the reformers in his Government, the coming year could start with a political and economic crisis as the country slows its gradual move towards the free market and the Kremlin sheds its reformers. Certainly, the many Russians who look to the predictions of astrologers for guidance about the course of the coming year are convinced that the nation is destined for a shake-up in politics and more uncertainty over the President's health.

Although he looked and sounded much fitter yesterday, Mr Yeltisn, according to Pavel Glova, one of Russia's leading astrologers, is destined for another serious ailment in March or April. The astrologer also said that a number of ministers, including Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, may be replaced and that Russia's future leader will be young, tall and fair-haired.

☐ **Greepeace arrests:** Eight members of Greenpeace were arrested yesterday when they climbed on to the Nuclear Power Ministry building in Moscow to protest against a plan to build four new nuclear reactors. The activists climbed onto the building to stretch out a huge banner reading "Stop Nuclear Piracy in Sosnovy Bor", a reference to a nuclear plant near St Petersburg where one of the new reactors is to be built.

Police officers arrested eight activists, including a German and an Austrian, on charges of holding an unsanctioned rally, Yevgeni Usov, a campaign organizer for Greenpeace in Russia, said. *(AP)*

Far Right split on race after Le Pen is fined

From Adam Sage in Paris

MINIMISING the Holocaust cost Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of France's National Front, a heavy fine yesterday in a legal hearing of significance for both his party and mainstream French politics.

M Le Pen was ordered to pay Fr300,000 for describing Nazi gas chambers as a "detail" in the history of the Second World War. A court in Nanterre, on the outskirts of Paris, said that the fine would pay for its judgment to be published in 15 national newspapers and magazines. French anti-racist organisations called the decision magnificent.

Under a 1990 law introduced largely to try to curb his frequent racist comments, it is an offence in France to "contest crimes against humanity". M Le Pen appeared to do just that earlier this month when visiting his German counterpart, Franz Schönhuber, a former SS officer.

Speaking in Munich, he said: "In a book of 1,000 pages on World War Two, the gas chambers take up ten to 15 lines. That is a detail." The remark caused widespread outrage in France. He has already been fined Fr100,000 for making a similar statement in 1987.

Yesterday he used the court case to repeat a favourite theme, a claim that France's "corrupt" mainstream party politicians have united to exclude the National Front from power. "I have been charged with a political offence," he said.

The National Front leader knew that he would earn particular condemnation for speaking out during the trial of Maurice Papon, the former Vichy civil servant accused of participating in the deportation of Jews to Nazi concentration camps. That case has focused attention on the French war role, creating unease among a section of the population. His comment came on the day President Chirac said that France should assume responsibility for its collaboration with Hitler's Germany.

However, M Le Pen's outburst provoked anger among some of his allies, illustrating a growing rift within the ultra-right party.

After more than a decade of almost non-stop success, which culminated when M Le Pen polled 15 per cent in the 1995 presidential elections, the movement is at a crossroads.

Its leader would like to continue in a vein marked by his outspoken attacks on immigrants. Yet some lieutenants want him to tone down the racism in the hope of striking alliances with mainstream right-wing parties. The issue is likely to determine the shape of French politics for years to come.

Le Pen: Holocaust jibe

Mafia son shoots to film fame

Palermo: A Mafia son turned film director has made a his first feature film about rival Mafia families. (Francesco Bongarra writes).

Ginseppe Greco, 47, known as Giorgio Castellani, who directed the film *I Grimaldi*, is the son of Michele Greco, nicknamed "the Pope", the Mafia boss presently serving a series of life sentences.

***I Grimaldi* was shot in Sicily on a low budget. It focuses on the changing values between old "ethical" Mafia families and their young rivals.**

Divorce reforms in France raise storm

By Adam Sage

A POLITICAL storm was brewing in France yesterday over government plans to simplify divorce with a cheap procedure in which the town hall would replace lawyers and judges.

Elisabeth Guigou, the Socialist Minister of Justice, wants to offer couples the chance to end their marriage through an agreement witnessed and ratified by their mayor. Her proposal is backed by 70 per cent of French people, according to a recent opinion poll, but has met opposition from centre-right politicians and Catholic family associations.

The present system is costly, with legal fees running to a minimum of Fr7,500 (£750), even where couples agree on all the issues, according to a recent survey. It can also prove lengthy. Couples are legally obliged to wait three months after giving notice of their desire to separate, but overworked judges take many more months to rubberstamp the decision.

Pro-family associations say the proposed changes would weaken marriages, while lawyers say it would create a "second-class citizen", with the rich using advocates to settle their disagreements and the poor having to be satisfied with town hall officials.

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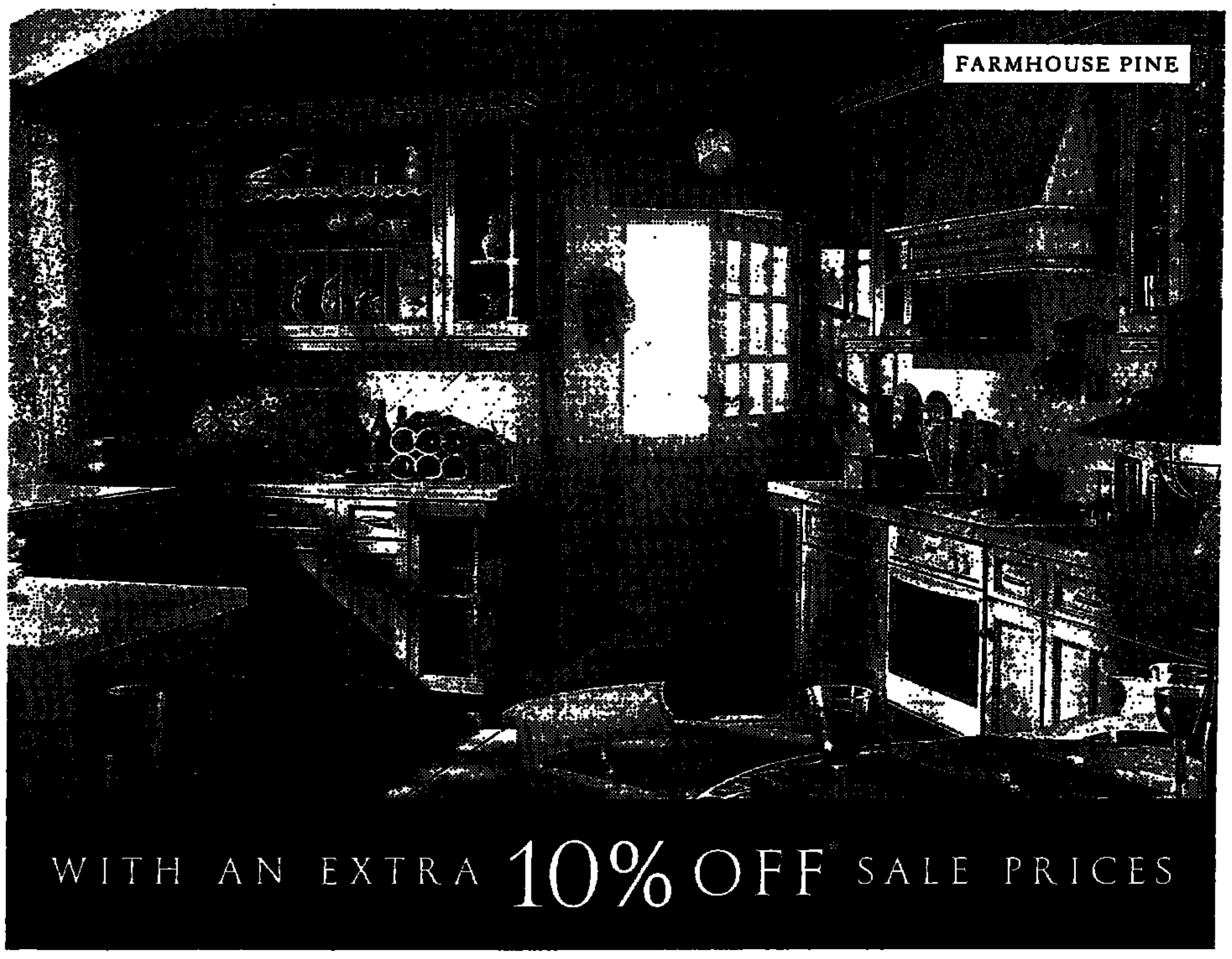

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Forces turn to nature for combat gear

Michael Evans reports on the use of plants to keep out the weather – and antlers to keep out the bullets

DES JENSON

George Jeronimidis, left, and Julian Vincent are studying the structure of antlers to create a light, flexible, impact-absorbent material

THE British soldier of the 21st century will be protected from enemy fire and the elements with the help of revolutionary materials modelled on nature's defence systems.

The application of nature's smarter ideas to military equipment has so intrigued the Ministry of Defence that it has awarded special contracts to the centre for biomimetics — the science of mimicking nature's best designs — at Reading University to study the possible applications of plants, animals and even insects.

It is intended that, by 2010, every combat soldier will have only three layers of clothing, instead of the present seven, to cater for all types of weather conditions. To that end, Julian Vincent, a biologist, and George Jeronimidis, a composite materials engineer, co-directors of the five-year-old centre, are examining the way plants cope with different climatic conditions.

"Plants have a very effective mechanism for moving water out, including leaves that have holes which open and close," Dr Vincent said. "Plants don't walk around and they don't have brains, so they are much simpler than animals to study. They can move certain bits and they can control their temperature. There are a lot of good ideas that come out of plants which may provide the solution for combat clothing of the future."

The researchers are also looking at pine cones because they have a simple and reliable way of responding to changing humidity. As atmospheric humidity drops, the scales open, and vice versa. What is planned is an artificial fibre system based on the mechanism of the pine cone. If the centre for biomimetics succeeds, the revolutionary fibre system could be incorporated into fabrics that would be able to change their "breathability" in response to changes in the environment.

The humble cockroach is under the microscope to see if its simple sensor devices can be recreated for the benefit of key weapon systems such as fighter aircraft. "Insects have achieved fine sensing systems which we could try and adapt for defence purposes," Dr Vincent said.

He and Professor Jeronimidis, who have been working together for 20 years, have also been asked to design novel energy-absorbing material. They began by studying the structure of nutshells, including the hazel and brazil, but are now focusing on the antler bone and are already enthusiastic about the prospects of taking "what we need" from the structure to create a light, flexible, impact-absorbent material.

Antlers have been fine-tuned by nature to absorb violent impact during the rutting season, and the researchers are convinced that they can produce a composite material that is based on the same structure. Dr Vincent said the antler bone contained a spongy material that helped to absorb violent impact and it should be possible to create materials that copy the same concept by developing a synergy between biology and engineering.

"What we're interested in is the way things are put together in nature, not the materials themselves. After all, nature only has half a dozen starting materials, such as water, protein, calcium salts and sugar-based polymers, whereas there are thousands of man-made starting materials."

Professor Jeronimidis said the key to the research was to take what was best from nature. "Some scientists spend a lot of time developing special glues to join different composite materials, but there is no glue in antlers: the joints are integrated and that's what we have to try and develop and also improve on if we can."

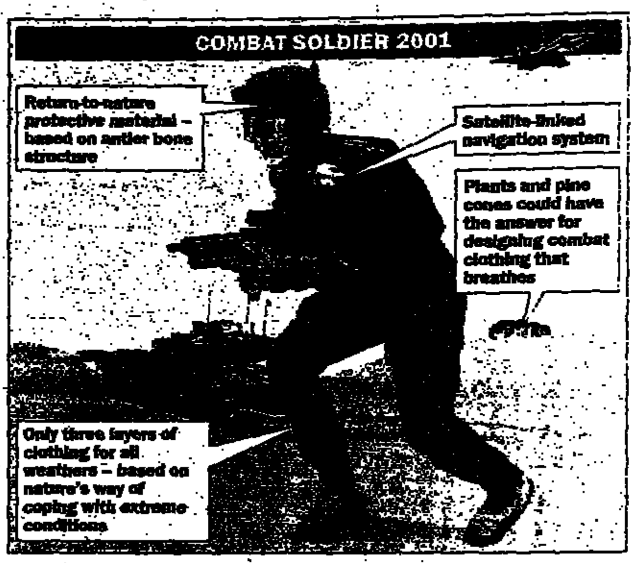
Under another contract, awarded by the MoD's Defence Evaluation Research Agency (Dera), they are studying how wood absorbs energy to see if there are any applications for the Armed Forces. Wood is a tough cellular material that can be damaged by impact but without shattering. Dr Vincent said: "Soft pine can be toughened even further by drilling carefully designed holes in it."

One typical application could be for armoured vehicles. They can be protected by adding steel plates, but this is very heavy and the centre for biomimetics hopes it may be able to develop something based on the concept of wood structures that could be as effective as steel but much lighter.

He added: "For us, in terms of energy input, material is cheap but shape is expensive, while in nature, material is expensive and shape is cheap. In other words, nature spends more time on design, and perhaps we should as well."

Pine cone properties could be used in fabric

COMBAT SOLDIER 2001



Return-to-nature protective material – based on antler bone structure
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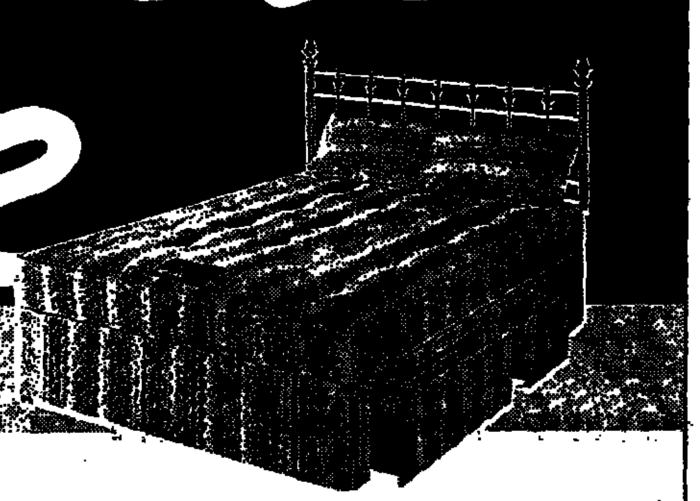

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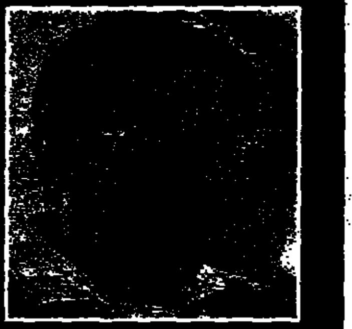

David Steel: cannabis, the cabinet minister and my son's conviction

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Australia's tropical waters come under attack from a dainty killer

Drownings linked to tiny jellyfish

FROM DES HOUGHTON
IN BRISBANE

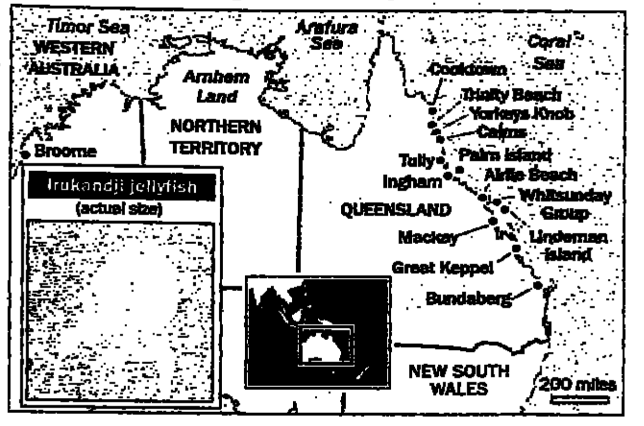
PRETTY little creatures no bigger than a thumbnail may hold the key to the unexplained deaths of dozens of swimmers in tropical Australia. Doctors at Australia's Venom Research Institute suspect that the irukandji jellyfish has a sting so toxic that it can induce heart attacks and breathing difficulties that lead to drowning.

Ken Winkel, head of the institute, said between 60 and 100 people a year are treated for serious irukandji stings in Queensland alone. However, it was probable that many irukandji victims may mistakenly think they have suffered heart attacks because the creature's toxin has a delayed reaction.

To the dismay of tourism officials, the dainty stinger is found in some of Australia's most popular resorts where British tourists are drawn each year. Because of its size and transparency, the irukandji, which has four six-inch tentacles, is rarely seen and hardly ever caught.

Peter Fenner, the chief medical officer for the Australian surf lifesaving movement, is convinced the irukandji is responsible for human deaths and he fears their numbers may be increasing. Most are found around Cairns and farther north, but the curse of the irukandji has been felt as far south as Bundaberg, right across tropical Australia and down to Broome on the coast of Western Australia.

Russell Hore, a marine biologist, has been campaigning for the development of an anti-venom since he was stung. "I was swimming at an offshore island marine park when I felt a stinging sensation on my neck," he said. "Within five minutes I had developed stomach cramps and pain in my lower spine that was knife-like. My chest became restricted and my hair was standing on end." He spent five days fighting for his life in intensive care.



Aborigines in northern Australia and Papua New Guinea have for generations told stories of pretty little stingers that paralyse swimmers. It is only recently, however, that researchers have begun to understand the seriousness of the irukandji threat. Doctors say victims can be unaware that they have been stung and almost never see the irukandji. They want more money for research. In the past 50 years Australia has produced anti-venom for a host of deadly creatures: The tiger snake, the taipan, the brown snake, the redback spider and the irukandji's larger, more deadly relative, the box jellyfish.

In his three-year search Mr Hore has captured only 18 irukandji, all on the same day. Then the project met a disaster. Mr Hore said he transferred his precious cargo to the venom institute at Melbourne University, but a delivery delay meant the jellyfish were useless for research by the time they reached Dr Winkel's desk. Dr Winkel has since struggled to separate proteins extracted from the handful of tentacles he has in his possession.

"We don't know whether we will require 100 or 50 specimens to get a neutralising antibody to block the toxin binding to the cells," Dr Winkel said. "There is an ongoing supply problem with these little creatures. Developing an anti-venom is a long-term project and we will need to grow them to harvest their tentacles."

Meanwhile, Dr Fenner reports more cases of irukandji sting, either because they are more numerous or or because more people are using the reef. He continues to campaign with health authorities for research money.

"The Surf Lifesaving Association . . . has a strong commitment to help to find a treatment for this tiny jellyfish that causes such misery and horrendous cost," he said. "Funding is essential to allow trained professionals to catch such jellyfish."

Tourist destinations such as Palm Island, Tully, Airlie Beach, the Whitsundays and Port Douglas have reported stings. A fully clothed professional pearl diver in Broome became a victim in 1991. At Palm Cove a swimmer was stung while inside a protective net in 1992.

Mackay, Cooktown, Lindeman Island, Great Keppel Island, Ingham, Arnhem Land, Yorkeys Knob and Trinity Beach are all known irukandji sites.

Cocaine island in the sun

David Adams, in St Kitts-Nevis, reports on a town living in fear

BASSETERRE, lined with palm trees and pastel gingerbread houses, used to be an out-of-the-way retreat in the eastern Caribbean for British and American tourists.

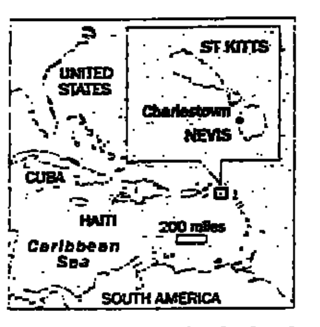
But in the past three years the St Kitts-Nevis port has become a haven for a ring of allegedly ruthless drug traffickers who have terrorised its 32,000 inhabitants.

Their ringleader, the police say, is Charles "Little Nut" Miller, 37, a food and soft drinks importer wanted in the US and Canada on cocaine-trafficking charges.

A request to extradite Mr Miller to the United States was rejected by a local magistrate last year. An appeal is pending against that ruling, but in the meantime Mr Miller remains a free man. The police say he continues to traffic in cocaine. In July, he was accused by Canadian police of taking part in a conspiracy to ship cocaine via St Kitts to Toronto.

The Miller case is much more than a frustrated drugs investigation. His untouchability highlights the increasing influence of drug traffickers in the tiny islands of the eastern Caribbean.

"What we have are some some people here who are a law unto themselves," said Brian Reynolds, the Scotland Yard inspector who was sent out at the request of the St Kitts Government to take over as commissioner of the corrupt and ill-trained local police force.



In the wake of intense counter-drug efforts along the border between Mexico and the United States, experts say that traffickers are once again pumping tonnes of cocaine into the Caribbean, on their way to the US and Europe. The United Nations released statistics on Monday indicating that two fifths of the cocaine sold in America alone enters via the Caribbean.

While the Clinton Administration seeks to rally support in the region for its war on drugs, the small, vulnerable islands of the area complain that US trade policies and reduced financial aid are undermining local economies and making the drug trade more attractive.

In the middle of that scenario Mr Miller is the Caribbean's worst nightmare. Born locally — his real name is Cecil Connor — he grew up on the tough streets of Jamaica where he was jailed at 17 for armed robbery. After escaping from prison he fled to America, where he went to work for the notorious Shower Posse, a Jamaican crime gang based in south Florida. In its heyday in the mid-1980s, the Posse controlled a large share of the marijuana and crack cocaine market in several US cities.

Charles Miller, wanted in the US on drug charges, is said to be behind a reign of terror in Basseterre

He was arrested in 1985 in New York and pleaded guilty to cocaine charges. But he agreed to co-operate with prosecutors and in 1989 provided devastating evidence against the Posse leaders in their trial in Miami on sweeping drugs and murder charges. In return, he was given immunity from prosecution and the Government gave him a new identity and admitted him to its secretive Witness Protection Programme.

But Mr Connor later dropped out of the protection programme and disappeared. He was soon back in St Kitts, using the name Charles Miller. Since his arrival, the police say, a string of drug-related incidents has left nine people dead or missing.

In November 1995, America accused Mr Miller of being the ringleader behind a conspiracy to smuggle half a tonne of cocaine through Miami in late 1994. He is also suspected of being behind the murder in 1994 of Jude Matthews, the head of the St Kitts Special Branch.

Yellowstone gases 'worse than ten power stations'

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

VOLCANOS, hot springs and other thermal features at the Yellowstone National Park contribute to the globe's "greenhouse" phenomenon by emitting millions of tonnes of carbon dioxie into the atmosphere each year, a study by American scientists has found.

In a paper presented this week at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco, researchers from the Pennsylvania State University reveal that the greenhouse gases given off by Yellowstone — the oldest and largest national park in the United States — exceed by at least ten times the emissions from a medium-sized coal-burning power plant of the sort that is found in many developing countries.

The park is renowned for its spectacular geysers, hot springs, waterfalls and canyons. Yet according to the findings of Cindy Werner and Professor Susan Brantley of Pennsylvania State University, the very features that are such a source of wonder could be the cause for environmental alarm.

Green lobby groups and campaigners are given to characterising the world's industrial "smokestacks" as the prime offenders in the increase in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. So far, hot spring systems such as those found at Yellowstone have not been included when scientific experts tally carbon dioxide emissions.

Dr Werner, a Geophysics researcher, spent three months this summer sampling the gases that emerge from Yellowstone's thermal vents, "mud pots" and the grounds adjacent to the park's Mud Volcano area. According to her findings, the bulk of the carbon dioxide appeared to escape from tectonic fault lines running through these areas.

In their subsequent and painstaking calculations, Dr Werner and Professor Brantley found that the Mud Volcano area alone produces about 176,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. Extrapolating from that figure, the scientists concluded that the entire park must emit 44 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year, the equivalent of ten Romanian power stations built in the Ceausescu era.

Dr Werner said: "We believe that geothermal systems are significant contributors to global estimates of carbon dioxide."

Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have nearly doubled in the past century. Most of the responsibility for this increase has been ascribed to the burning of fossil fuels. Blame has also been placed on the widespread disappearance of the tropical forests which once performed the role of recycling carbon dioxide gas into oxygen.

Scientists have for long been aware that volcanic systems, such as the one which is found in Yellowstone, spew large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. But until the Yellowstone study little effort had been made to quantify the emissions from natural geothermal systems.

Global warming was the focus of the international treaty concluded recently in Kyoto, which demands that Western nations cut emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases that are responsible for global warming.

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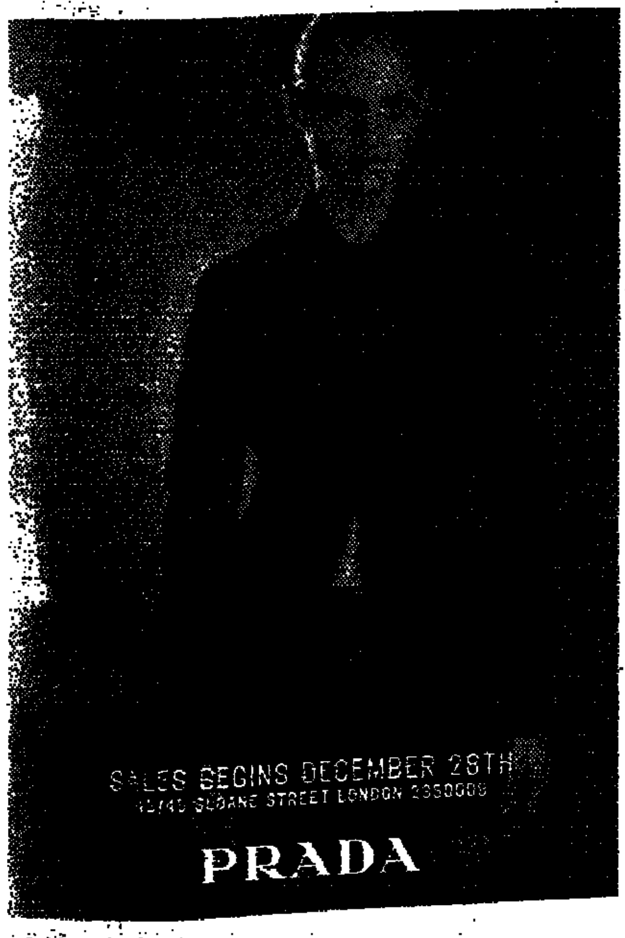
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Monkeys will be returned to Amazon

Philip Delves Broughton on an animal rescue plan

WOOLLY monkeys were taken from the Upper Amazon only 30 years ago for lovers in Europe of exotic pets. Plucked from their natural habitat they became lonely and rarely lived more than two years.

This was just one of many assaults on their survival. Amazon Indians, who had always hunted and trapped woolly monkeys, were suddenly joined by others, armed with guns and capable of killing an entire monkey community in one hunting trip.

The devastation of the rain forests by logging and mining companies destroyed the monkeys' forest canopy where they swing from their tails foraging for food. Cornwall may be a long way from the Amazon, but there has been a sanctuary for woolly monkeys there since the 1960s, when Len Williams was given one as a pet. It did not take him long to see that they were social animals who thrived on each others' company and that they needed space to be happy.

He persuaded pet owners and zoos to let their monkeys come down to the sanctuary in Cornwall and he now keeps 22 monkeys in a large area of linked enclosures providing a variety of natural environments. Now, with the support of the Born Free Foundation, one of the two charities chosen by *The Times* for its Christmas Appeal, it is hoped that the monkeys can be restored to the Brazilian rainforests.

The Cornwall Monkey Sanctuary, which since the death of Len Williams has been run by the Monkey Trust, has been in close contact with the Rehabilitation Centre of Amazonian Primates in Brazil for the past two years. The centre looks after 40 woolly monkeys and several other primate species, all of whom have been confiscated from the illegal pet trade. It will oversee the creation of a secure sanctuary for the woolly monkeys in the Amazon rainforest.

This strategy of giving animals as much freedom as possible while protecting their population numbers is at the very heart of the Born Free Foundation's work.

The foundation's primate project, however, is not restricted to woolly monkeys. It also helps to finance anti-poaching units in Uganda in order to protect the mountain gorillas and chimpanzees. Targeting of funds means that all money raised by this appeal will have an immediate and powerful benefit on the animals protected by the project.

A woolly monkey and its infant at the Cornwall Monkey Sanctuary

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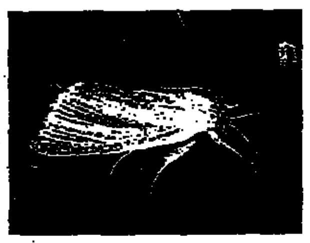
If more than the £40,000 required for the gene sequencer is raised through this Christmas appeal, it will go directly to other vital prostate cancer research at the Institute of Cancer Research.

'Extinct' moth discovered in abundance

By Robin Young

ALMOST half a century after last being seen in Britain, a 2in moth has staged a comeback. *Sedina buettneri*, otherwise known as Blair's wainscot, has been rediscovered in force in a secluded Dorset river valley.



Blair's wainscot moth

Blair's wainscot was first identified in this country in 1946 by a retired British Museum beetle expert, Dr K.G. Blair, from whom it took its name. The moth disappeared, however, a few years later and the species was officially presumed extinct in Britain. The only known colony, on the Isle of Wight, was destroyed by land drainage and burning.

Butterfly Conservation, the organisation that made the new find, is anxious to deter collectors and says the colony's precise location will remain a secret. A spokeswoman said: "The reappearance of Blair's wainscot illustrates what a tenuous hold many species have on survival. We should not celebrate too soon. If intensive agriculture methods ever intrude into the colony, Blair's wainscot could again disappear."

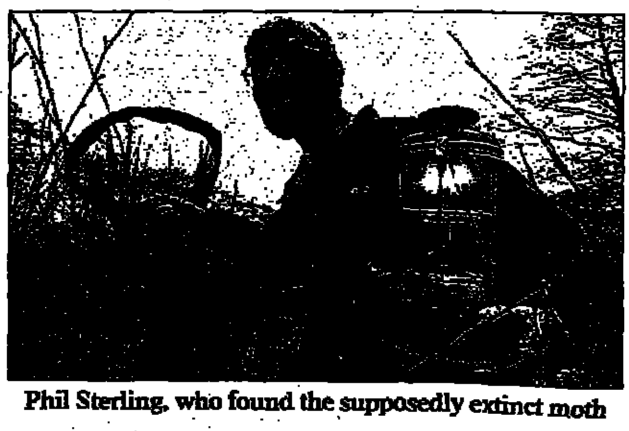
The moth, with delicate pink streaks on its wings, feeds on sedge, but experts say it is unlikely to be found beyond southern Britain, thus excluding from its range the Sedgefield constituency of its namesake, the Prime Minister.

Phil Sterling, Dorset county ecologist and the local moths officer for Butterfly Conservation, said two males and a female were first spotted late in 1996. These were thought to be occasional migrants but the discovery of larvae in recent weeks has confirmed the existence of an established colony.

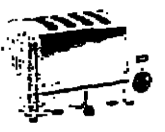
"It is possible they have returned here from the Continent," Mr Sterling said. "Or they may have survived in such small numbers that they were never spotted before. It is a bit of a collector's item. I suspect there will be tens of them flying here next year, although that gives a false impression of their viability."

The wainscot family of moths take their name from distinctive markings thought to resemble wood panelling.

Downing Street said yesterday: "We are delighted to hear of the reappearance of this moth. We sincerely hope it continues to flourish."



Phil Sterling, who found the supposedly extinct moth



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Nurses beg to know their fate

Their trial may be over but the agonising wait continues, writes

Daniel McGrory

AS THEY begin their second year in a cramped and stifling Saudi jail, Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan are pleading with their captors to end the *uncertainty* over their eventual fate.

The British nurses complain that they have still not been officially charged over the murder of an Australian colleague and growing rumours circulating in their prison over their likely punishment is damaging their health.

While McLauchlan was allowed visits this week from her husband and parents, prison staff kept a suicide watch over Parry. The injuries of her sister, Sandra, in a car crash meant that her only surviving relative was not able to visit, so Parry was left in cell 8 of Damman Central Prison, known as the International House, with a handful of convicted drug smugglers as her only company.

In the new year she is expected to be found guilty of murder and, although Saudi diplomats have told the Foreign Office privately that she will not be executed, her family are sceptical about such assurances. A Saudi man found guilty of murder was beheaded in public yesterday, bringing the total for the year to 123.

Parry's family describe her as "extremely depressed". Jonathan Ashbee, her brother-in-law, said: "We are very worried about Deborah. The fact that she has no idea when all this will be resolved is mind-blowing.

"Being in a Saudi jail is awful enough but when you haven't done anything wrong it is a living hell. In the weeks before Christmas the girls were haunted by rumours circulating the jail that Deborah faces 15 years and Lucille will have to serve eight as a warning that Westerners get no special privileges."

In Christmas messages to their families the nurses told of their fears that it could be years before they will be allowed home. Diplomats who visited them could offer no hope of any early end to their ordeal.

The gamble they face in the new year is whether to accept their jail sentences and then plead with King Fahd for clemency and an early release. If they appeal, as they seem determined to do, the process could take another two years. Parry conceded to her family: "Whatever we do, we will be in prison for more Christmases to come."

McLauchlan was allowed out of prison to see her parents at a local police station and was hoping that the authorities would allow her time alone with Grant Ferrie, whom she married last month.

Her parents, Stan and Anne, complain that, although she was sentenced in September to 500 lashes and eight years in jail, she has still not been told what she was convicted of. Her family do not know if the £750,000 "blood money" settlement agreed with Frank Gilford, the brother of their alleged victim, Yvonne Gilford, which spared Parry the death penalty, also applies to her flogging and jail sentence. A diplomatic source in the kingdom admitted: "We frankly don't know what the next move is, or when it will come, which is of no consolation to the women or their families."

Frank Gilford: "blood money" deal

The two women are also indignant that Mr Gilford has yet to keep his side of the bargain, which involved his supporting their demand for the Saudi authorities to reopen their investigation, using information the nurses' lawyers and private detectives have uncovered about the murder at the King Fahd medical centre in Dharhan.

So far the authorities have refused. Saudi police say they have no doubt of the Britons' guilt.

It was in the early hours of December 11 last year that the body of Miss Gilford was found in her bedroom in Block 44. She had been bludgeoned, suffocated and stabbed 13 times.

Police waited two days before interviewing McLauchlan, 31, from Dundee, and Parry, 38, from Alton, Hampshire. Six days later, Parry and McLauchlan were arrested as they visited a shopping complex. Police say they were using Miss Gilford's bankcard to draw money and admitted the killing.

Police claim there had been a row between Parry and Miss Gilford, allegedly over the ending of a lesbian relationship, and that McLauchlan entered the apartment to separate them. Parry is then said to have hit Miss Gilford with an ornamental teapot and McLauchlan to have held a pillow over her face while Parry stabbed her.

The nurses' account of their confession is dramatically different. They tell of being frogmarched into Dharhan police station where they were stripped, sexually assaulted and made to sign confessions on a promise that they would be freed.

Their families argue that the Saudis ignored forensic evidence such as the clump of blonde hair found gripped in Miss Gilford's hand. Neither of the accused is blonde. A man's bracelet was found near the body and there were stories of how Miss Gilford had clashed with security guards at the hospital because she allegedly threatened their money-lending and prostitution rackets.

Five guards on duty that night disappeared and were never questioned. One was suspected of the murder of another nurse, a year earlier, in the same hospital.

Despite assurances that the women will not be flogged, relatives are dismissive, saying that promises of a fair trial were ignored. The murder weapon has never been found, no fingerprints of the women were in the Gilford apartment and both had alibis.

Parry has been allowed a handful of visits to the prison psychiatrist and has been prescribed antidepressants. Her family are concerned that her condition continues to deteriorate. McLauchlan has always been the more combatative of the two, arguing with her guards over their mistreatment. It was she who led protests for better prison facilities.

Mr Ashbee said: "What that means is a table-tennis set for recreation and, instead of four holes in the ground as toilets, the inmates have six between them. That means the raw sewage does not spill out on to the floor until later in the day." The few washbasins they share are clogged with nappies because many of the women have given birth there after being jailed for adultery.

The women are given books and writing materials by British diplomats who visit them once a week but they spend most of their days sitting underneathh lines of flapping washing trying to find some shade and cool. Their only exercise is to walk around the small courtyard. "It is the boredom that gets them down," Mr Ashbee said.

They sleep on 2in-thick foam mattresses on steel bunks and share with up to ten other women. Cockroaches infest the building and the air-conditioning has not worked properly for five years. Their daily diet is invariably pitta bread, salad and rice; both have lost weight and suffered bouts of dysentery. They have no television and keep in touch only through Parry's transistor radio.

Diplomats successfully approached companies trading in defence contracts in the region to pay Mr Gilford's blood money because neither family could raise the figure. Lawyers in Britain and Saudi Arabia have worked for free and admit they can see no early end to the women's ordeal.

Deborah Parry, left, has still not been sentenced over the death of Yvonne Gilford, centre. Lucille McLauchlan, right, faces 500 lashes and eight years in jail but neither she, her parents Stan and Anne, far right, husband Grant Ferrie, with McLauchlan second right, nor her lawyer, Salah al-Hejailan, know the charge. Parry's sister, Sandra, and brother-in-law, Jonathan Ashbee, left, fear for her health

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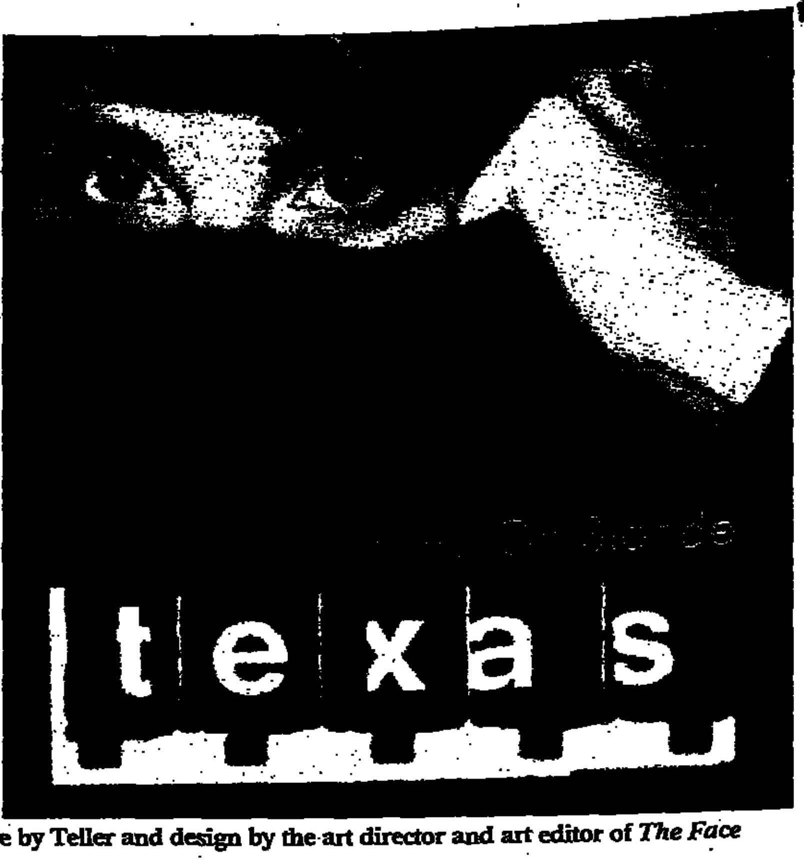
How the forgotten band made sure their face fitted

Des Burkinshaw meets 1997's pop pin-up, and wonders who is next



From rock chick to rock chic: the old image of Texas, and the album cover with a Spiteri picture by Teller and design by the art director and art editor of *The Face*

A WOMAN in her late twenties steps in front of a top-line fashion photographer and becomes the pop face of 1997.

Juergen Teller's raw but sexy pictures of Charleen Spiteri, lead singer of Texas, helped to rescue the band's career from doldrums so deep that it was almost time for them to stick spangles on the drums and head for the cabaret circuit.

A year on, the band have infuriated their critics by notching up four top ten hits, *Say What You Want*, *Halo*, *Black Eyed Boy*, and *Put Your Arms Around Me*, and sold more than 1.2 million copies of their album, *White on Blonde*. They have been nominated everywhere for Comeback of the Year awards, and are almost certain to carry off baskets of gongs at February's Brit awards. As the year draws to a close, insiders in the record industry like to play a game of guessing which other bands could benefit from a style makeover. The year has already seen the likes of Natalie Imbruglia score hit singles with a look owing more than a passing nod to Spiteri.

Certainly, Spiteri feels vindicated after being written off by the critics. "You have a real high, like the album going in at No 1, and you think it can't get any better, but then it does," she says in her broad Glaswegian accent. "It has been a fantastic year for us."

It could have been so different. This time last year, they were a forgotten band. They had a top ten hit in 1989 with *I Don't Want A Lover*, but a series of mediocre albums followed, and ten other singles barely scrapped into the top 40. After living in Paris for a year, Spiteri, 29, told her co-writer, Johnny McElhone, that enough was enough, and that the band needed to get groovy. They added some loops and samples to the band's sound and hip, hop, bullseye.

The success of the music speaks for itself. But it was Spiteri's transformation from leather-clad surly "rock chick" to Prada-clad androgynous icon who excited everyone from Chris Evans to fashion journalists. Especially a picture of her emerging from a shower, hair sopping wet, wrapping herself in a towel

Earlier this year, Evans told Radio One listeners that he would leave his girlfriend for her, given half a chance. Next day, he sheepishly admitted that he had been ticked off by his girlfriend. His support for *Say What You Want* was widely credited for its success, but Spiteri points out: "It was a hit all over the world, so it can't just have been that, can it?".

You've got to be cool to be on the cover of *The Face* magazine. The December issue featured Spiteri with Memory Man from American rap act Wu Tang Clan. The pair have recorded a new version of *Say What You Want* for next year.

And as the dollars, pounds and yen pour in for Mercury Records, a giant collective lightbulb has popped on over the heads of the other record companies. Could it be possible that other bands languishing at the bottom of the roster — maybe with four albums to their credit but no hit singles for years — could be converted into fashionable profit?

Dave Jennings, of the weekly *Melody Maker*, has no doubts which fading pop star should spice himself up with a makeover. He says: "Simon Le Bon from Duran Duran should do a Sting." Instead of teaming up with Puff Daddy, however, he should team up with Mark Morrison and record a new version of Duran Duran's *Wild Boys*.

Although a sex symbol in his day, could Le Bon still cut the fashion mustard in 1998? "Oh yes," says Jennings. "All he needs to do is get down the gym, lose a few pounds and get rapper Ice T in to give him some wardrobe advice — a colourful jacket, a fedora — he'd look great."

And what about Spiteri herself? The former hairdresser has obviously enjoyed her year as an iconic pin-up, but it is apparent she really cares only about the music. There is no make-up lady in tow. A keen rock climber, she points out to interviewers that her nose has been broken four times and never fixed.

Kas Mercer, her long-time press officer at Mercury Records, is still puzzled by everything that has happened this year: "I've *always* thought she was lovely. I don't think she's changed that much apart from her hair. I think the rest of the world has just finally caught up." Spiteri says with a shrug: "It's like my face just seems to fit this period in time. I was a bit of an ugly duckling, and now I'm a swan. I just woke up one morning and my face had changed."

Spiteri: "I was an ugly duckling," she says

While they can do no wrong at present, she knows from the band's wilderness period that their current success and her status as Most Fanciable Woman in Pop are only temporary.

"What does being the face of the year mean?" she says. "It just means that there'll be another one along next year."

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VALERIE GROVE MEETS: DAVID BENSON

Carrying on Kenneth's pain

A one-man show proves to be more than an exercise in uncanny impersonation

MARTIN BEDDALL

David Benson includes vignettes from his own life: "You must accept yourself, faults and all"

Here is a *post-Christmas* treat: you have exactly two weeks in which to catch David Benson before his one-man show, subtitled *My Life With Kenneth Williams*, ends its 18-month tour at Hammersmith, West London.

I first caught the show at the Edinburgh festival this summer. In the audience behind me was Margaret Forster (always hard to please) and at the end we both turned and chorused: "What a performance."

Benson's impersonation is faultless, but the show is far more than that. "People come expecting 'Carry On Kenneth' and a lot of gurning, and are surprised when it's not that simple," Benson says. "They come to cackle, and then *they turn* contemplative. Which seems to me the whole point of theatre."

Williams's friends have flocked to it and are staggered by Benson's uncanny accuracy. Of the scene where KW is in a restaurant with friends, bossing them about, telling loud stories, insulting other diners, they say, "That's just what it was like having dinner with him — how did you know?" ("I behaved disgracefully" is a refrain in Williams's diaries.)

Benson is unblinkingly truthful about Williams's childish emotional avarice, his narcissism, his camp ambivalence, his wild morale swings from blustering bumptiousness to self-lacerating melancholy. He kept his stove wrapped in Cellophane and his lavatory barred to visitors; was an autodidact who flaunted his knowledge of Schopenhauer in that trivial forum. *Just A Minute*; was socially difficult, hating to be outdone in anecdotage, and waspish and spiteful, even, on chat shows. But he was also loved for his irreplaceable uniqueness, his genius.

Benson never met Williams. The only tenuous connection was that, at 13, he wrote a story, *The Rag-and-Bone Man*, which won a *Jackanory* competition in 1975. Williams read it on the programme. Benson was mortified: he wanted his idol, Spike Milligan, to read it. Williams was so camp, the entire school — a comprehensive in Birmingham — would jeer at him.

He was saved, at school, by his vocal agility; he could do any voice, Williams included. He was the sort of lad who played around making tapes of sound-effects, and could do all the Goons. (In the show he does a particularly brilliant Maggie Smith.)

Offstage, the engaging Benson resembles a young James Cagney in his Buster Keaton hat. After reading theatre studies at London University, he packed his bags and headed for Edinburgh, where he knew nobody, "to find out who I was". He washed dishes and worked in a homosexual bookshop, the first in Scotland, "polishing up my persona for public presentation". Then he joined Jeremy Weller's Grassmarket Theatre, which did semi-documentary improvisations with people from the social substrata in a Fringe trilogy entitled *Glad, Mad and Bad*. "I was flung into a room with scaggy old homeless drunks and young football hooligans, playing the warden of a hostel. It was exhilarating."

Benson had to discipline the material ("they all had amazing stories to tell, but no sense of what worked dramatically") while retaining its passion and fire. Very good training for constructing his Williams show from a mountain of material, holding his audience in thrall with unexpected twists, as when he suddenly apes his old headmaster and makes the audience sing *All Things Bright And Beautiful*.

The performer from whom he has learnt most is Barry Humphries. "I love the way Dame Edna's eye rakes the audience for the right victim. She jokes about being psychic, and there is something intuitive about the antennae. Frankie Howerd had that too."

He asks his audience at one point to put up their hands if they've got a mad mother. People often say, lightly, "My mother's quite mad": but Benson's mother really was. She was taken away to a home when he was 15; his father had divorced her, but she still hung around the house like a poltergeist. "You know in the show, when I say it was like an exorcism when she left? People laugh at that, but it's true. You're not supposed to feel that about your mother."

His father, an Oxford-educated GP still practising in Birmingham, held the family together: his twin sister, older brother ("who suffered most over my mother's madness"), half-sister, half-brother and stepsister. Hodgson is the family name, but Equity already had a David Hodgson, so he switched to Benson, with relief. "I could never have succeeded as Hodgson. And my new name gave me a new confidence, immediately shutting off the ghost of the past that stopped me achieving."

> ❛ They come to cackle and then they turn contemplative ❜

He includes vignettes from his own life in the show to be emotionally uncompromising. He was never "besotted" by Williams. He is more interested in Dr Johnson's *amanuensis*, Boswell, who said no event could be experienced until you have written it down.

Benson first kept a diary at 19, "when I felt I would explode if I didn't tell someone I was homosexual". He told his A-level English teacher, Gwyn Thomas, who was wonderfully understanding. "Well, David," she said, "what you've just told me, in Greek times, would have been absolutely normal."

"On our first day, she came in, extremely striking, hair piled up in a bun, perched on the the desk, and began reading *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. She was very camp, a nicer Miss Brodie. I was entranced. I thought, this is the teacher I've been looking for all my life. I felt I could tell her anything."

Exactly three years ago, Benson was working full-time in a New York laundromat and mailing office, in the Bronx: folding sheets and sending faxes, living with his American lover. "I loved him to death, but I had to stop" — they broke up in Edinburgh this summer — "because it had become like Orton and Halliwell. I couldn't enjoy my success; I felt less of a person, having to consider this other person's needs and feelings all the time. Why do people need partners? You meet someone, and before you know it you've signed this unwritten contract *that you'll never want* to see anyone else. I think being single is my natural state."

He says taking up journal writing again enabled him to write the show. He had been blocked by a terror of writing. Now he starts every day by covering up to six A4 pages in longhand: "a daily letter to myself, solving problems and deciding what I really want".

When people write to him after the show for advice, he tells them to start a journal. "Contentment can only come through self-knowledge. You must accept yourself, faults and all. So many people are terrified of being alone."

But KW lived alone and wrote journals, and still committed suicide ... "This is what I can't understand: to spend that much time brooding on your life and never reach a point when you accept your life as it is and enjoy it."

If Benson has a hero, it is more Quentin Crisp than KW, "because Crisp is so sane and witty, and knew and accepted his faults. Kenneth was in constant conflict with himself and with life generally. Everything he loved, he hated — his audience, himself, Louie his mother. Louie had a lot to do with his problems. But he wouldn't hear a word said against her." Williams railed against public recognition: "I can't walk down a street in London without the nudges, the staring, the following, the requests for autographs and all the shouting (abuse and praise) ... I loathe it. I would willingly exchange it all for anonymity and a steady, uninspiring job which required diligence and integrity."

"A lie," says Benson, "but it indicates his confusion." Barry Took's wife, Lyn, asked why Benson does not show the kind, sweet side of Kenneth. "But I am trying to show a man *in extremis*. He's had enough. He longs to 'cease upon the midnight with no pain'."

We are in a traffic jam. Benson shouts " 'Ere, get a move on!" out of the car window, in his Kenneth Williams voice. He can stop a street dead in a trice by turning on the Kenneth.

"*But as of January 11, which is* also my 36th birthday, I've got to start afresh. I'll be like Fred without Ginger, but I don't want people to think I can't do anything but Kenneth, so we're having a trial separation."

The first step will be playing Noël Coward in a new television series of *Goodnight Sweetheart*, by Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran. Then he is going to write a book (Quentin Crisp said everyone should write one book, and it should be about themselves) about how his Kenneth Williams show *took him "from total obscurity into* the spotlight". So while he's still there, try to catch this extraordinary theatrical experience.

☐ *Think No Evil Of Us ... My Life With Kenneth Williams*, Lyric Studio, Hammersmith, West London, until January 10

Something safe for the family to talk about

TELEVISION

Paul Hoggart

on the holiday season's offerings

Christmas television makes a serious effort to offer an alternative to having a life these days. So we had quite a tricky choice on Christmas Eve, faced with the prospect of yet another dose of conventionalised ancient rituals, presided over by people in outlandish vestments.

But we passed on the *Eurotrash* Christmas special and went to midnight Mass in Norwich Cathedral instead, which was much more fun.

Christmas Day was another story, however. In a world where the piano has not so much been killed as ethnically cleansed, television has become the heart of our annual extended family gatherings, providing something safely neutral to talk about.

Watching *Top of the Pops* with eight children aged 7 to 23, for instance, is much better than watching it at home. How else could I have known that Esther, of Eternal, has "an ugly haircut" or that their co-singer Bebe Willans used to have hair, but "he's a baldy now".

Nor would I have realised that the Leeds anarchist rockers Chumbawamba had sold out by dropping the letters "pi" from a word ending "ssing" from this family show, or spotted that Ultra Nate seems to have sandpaper glued to her head.

If you tried very hard you could *just about avoid the* Teletubbies, although I was delighted to see Harry Enfield throwing Po down a flight of stairs in his wonderful Christmas special. This also included a superb sketch about a man entertaining his son and son's gay lover in which Harry was apparently played by his father, Edward.

The Spice Girls, on the other hand, were harder to dodge. Oddly enough they forgot to mention either their manager or a certain Spanish awards ceremony in their review of the year. Still, Harry Enfield's Self-Righteous Brothers' rage at their shoddy workmanship as roofers, plumbers etc made up for that. Enfield's was one of the two best Christmas shows this year.

BBC2's *Cardigans at Christmas* showed us just how far we have come since the Fifties. The oddball commentators seemed to have been recruited from a late-night raid on the Groucho Club but the clips were wonderful, if only for reminding us just how ghastly Christmas television used to be.

This theme was deliciously echoed in the Perry Como-style inserts in this year's other triumph, *Men Behaving Badly*, a wonderful tragicomic counterpoint and a fine climax to a traditional family day spent chortling drunkenly on the sofa.

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A little bit of Swampy in us all

Simon Barnes on the importance of innocence

When I was asked to choose my image of the year. I chose Swampy. Swampy, the eco-warrior, blazing with that most frightening of all qualities: innocence. The world is going wrong: well, I had better put it right, then, hadn't I? Ideas that simple, that honest, that innocent: they frighten the life out of people.

Christmas is followed by St Stephen's Day. St Stephen's by the Day of the Holy Innocents. These are two of the carnal and bloody acts that are always celebrated around Christmas: what has been called "the birthday garland of martyrs". So perhaps this is not a bad time in which to celebrate the innocence of Swampy.

Swampy thought the planet was being spoilt, and that this was a bad thing. So he took on the possibility of death and the certainty of quite extraordinary discomfort in order to stop various bits of planet from being paved over or otherwise destroyed. He tunnelled beneath the wrongs of a wrong-minded society.

I am not so much concerned with Swampy the man as with Swampy the icon: or to be more exact, Swampy the figure on a medieval triptych; the face of holy innocence bearing with him the gruesome implements of his martyrdom: a saint traditionally portrayed with headtorch and asymmetric haircut. Innocence is the most difficult of things to deal with. It lays bare the corruptions and compromises within oneself: it cries out for exploitation. Why are we destroying the planet? Who actually wants it to be destroyed? And what are you doing about it?

Christmas is a time in which innocence is much celebrated. The main form of celebration is telling lies to children about a white-bearded elderly gentleman; innocence crying out, as it does, for exploitation. Children, of course, greatly prefer truth to lies. I am currently trying to write a book for children that tells the truth about the state of the planet. My working title, which is half, but only half, facetious, is *Every Child's Book of the Ecological Holocaust*.

Children, with that perfect moral directness which is the difference between innocence and naivete, have no difficulty in seeing that it is wrong to kill off the snow leopard, the Seychelles magpie-robin, the Iowa pleistocene snail, the Lake Victoria cichlids and the Kerry slug — all endangered animals.

Children see the infinite fragility of their, our world and, without compromise, wish to save it. They wish to save the world, and the creatures within it, which comes to much the same thing. There is an essential innocence to this vision: just as there is an innocence — not naivete — about the entire global conservation movement.

Innocence is by definitition fragile. Innocence is something you are supposed to lose, or have lost for you. I once heard a Christmas Day sermon when I went to Mass with my wife, who is a Roman Catholic. The sermon's theme was the fragility of of God; for God came to Earth as a baby in need of looking after, and not as conquering king.

The priest then neatly drew the analogy: helpless God, helpless Earth. Both, in their innocence, at the mercy of human hands. The human record of looking after both is not exactly one hundred per cent; or at least, not in the right direction.

I am not sure whether it was the Labour Government that was innocent, or those that voted it in. But life is not much fun without hope. And so we chose to believe in change, the hope that for once, the new boss will not be the same as the old boss.

But in truth, we were not innocent, which is a fine thing to be. We were naive, which is not. If there was an innocent abroad at election time, perhaps it was Martin Bell, who came up with the shocking suggestion that it was better to vote for goodness than for badness.

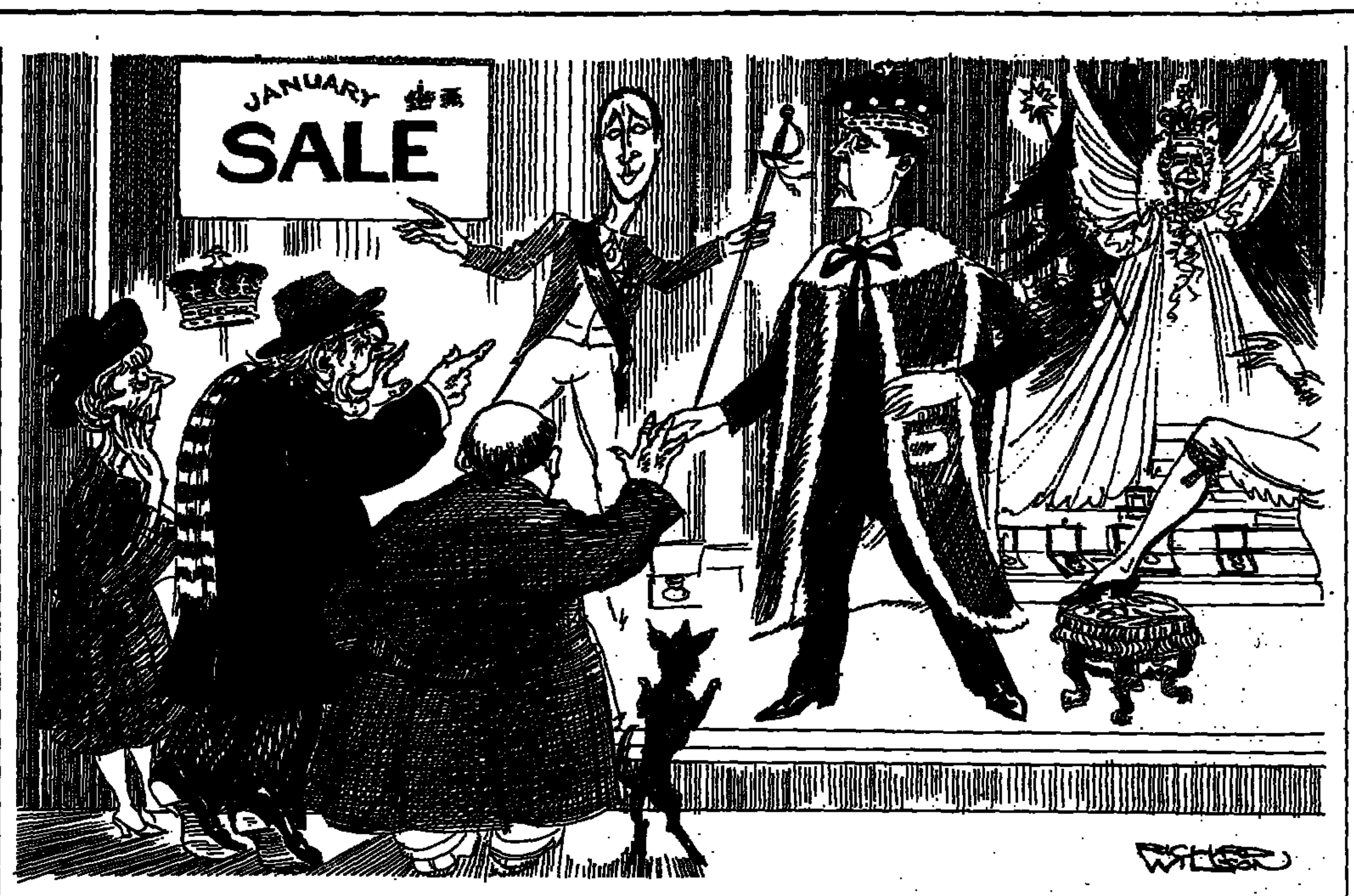
> Perhaps we were really voting for Swampy, not Blair

But really, we voted in a load of politicians, and now we start whingeing because they are behaving like politicians. Perhaps the secret of our dismay is that we did not really want to vote for politicians at all. We wanted to vote for goodness; for innocence. Perhaps the votes cast for Tony Blair were in fact intended for Swampy.

Perhaps we wanted to vote in an innocent who believed that bad things should be stopped and that good things should be started. Perhaps the Labour landslide was a simple longing for lost innocence: an innocent longing for lost simplicities.

The story of the rest of the year has been the shocking revelation that Tony Blair was not Swampy after all. Just another politician. He may turn out to be a good politician — good in the sense of "virtuous", as well as the more political sense of "effective" — but a politician he will remain.

We need the innocence of Swampy. More, we all need to free the Swampy within ourselves. The sight of a skein of geese, a good bit of wild country, or for that matter, a jolly child, is enough to unleash the innocent part of ourselves. Perhaps we do not ever truly lose our innocence. We just mislay it.



The roots of dishonour

The honours system is probably past reform — so why do our Prime Ministers love it so much?

Simon Jenkins

This is the time of year when an old man's fancy turns to honour. Or rather it turns to honours, which is not quite the same thing. He knows already whether his long overdue "recognition" has come through, but in a few days' time the world will know as well. As the recent saga of Bernie Ecclestone revealed, occasional agonies enhance the ecstasy. You do not need to read Trollope to know that there is nothing so potent in public life as "the Queen has been pleased ..."

The proudly unhonoured Michael Foot tells a story of his early days as Labour leader. He was invited to suggest some new Labour peers but had declined to do so since he was opposed to the Upper House and was chary of seeming a hypocrite. (His colleagues were to prove less bound by consistency or scruple.) The whips protested bitterly. The leader might find nominating peers distasteful, but while the system existed the party could not ignore it.

Mr Foot conceded under protest and put forward six names of former Labour MPs whom he knew to be on hard times. The whips were appalled at the list. "But Michael, none of them has any money," they cried. Mr Foot at this point held his ground.

Exploiting the honours list for party gain is, under the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925, a misdemeanour rendering the culprit liable for a two-year imprisonment or a fine of up to £500. Anyone who gives money in the hope of obtaining an honour "is liable to forfeit that same to His Majesty". To the best of my knowledge this law has never been enforced. Abusing the list is the political equivalent of taking cannabis. It seems mildly pleasant and the crime is victimless. All that matters is not getting caught.

Most liberal-minded party leaders pledge themselves to reform this venal but otherwise trivial corner of public life. They soon find honours as potent for the giver as for the receiver. Harold Wilson abolished "political honours" but reinvented them under another name. James Callaghan abolished them but Margaret Thatcher reintroduced them and even made some hereditary.

Party managers used knighthoods and peerages to raise money, reward journalists and discipline backbenchers. The top 20 donors to Conservative Party funds in the 1980s received a total of eight peerages and 11 knighthoods. Both Conservative and Labour leaders have come to treat roughly half the "before-the-name" honours list (peerages and knighthoods) as a crude lever for party fundraising. Neither the monarch nor the honours scrutiny committee has felt strong enough to object.

John Major promised to democratise the system and end "gongs with jobs". The only job excluded from this reform, surprise, surprise, was politics. Political honours were retained and the abuse of the list continued. If any backbench loyalist could get a knighthood and a minister a peerage, such perks could hardly be denied to civil servants, judges or ambassadors, let alone hard-working Tory financiers. Half of Mr Major's peerages went to party donors. Even the most mediocre of his aides were "honoured" on his resignation.

These honours came remarkably cheap. In his book *The Queen Has Been Pleased*, published by Secker, John Walker suggested that under Margaret Thatcher knighthoods came for donations of as little as £10,000 and peerages for £50,000. This is roughly what they cost, in cash terms, under Lloyd George. Benefactors of new Labour are said to have given even less to the blind trusts and yet been "recognised". Under the Stuart monarchs a baronetcy cost £1,000, which must be half a million in today's money. The currency of honour is thus debased.

Tinkering with the honours system has proved as ludicrous as regulating it has proved hopeless. Last week a suggestion was leaked that the word "empire" would be dropped from the Orders of Merit. The astonishing reason was that the Empire no longer existed. A question mark is also said to hang over the Order of the Bath and the crosses of St Michael and St George. Such cool rationalism must jeopardise the entire system. We are told that at least the Garter is secure. When Mr Major proudly announced the abolition of the "working-class" British Empire Medal, in favour of the "petty bourgeois" Member of the British Empire, he was praised to the skies. The consequence, I am told, is that the working classes now find it even harder to enter the halls of imperial grace.

When honours are showered on the good, bad and indifferent with apparent abandon, it is hopeless to deny what lawyers call a "consideration". As Mr Blair found in the case of Mr Ecclestone, there is no such thing as a free gift. Mr Ecclestone was reportedly pushed for a title by the Tories after giving them money even as he was switching his largesse to Labour. Mr Blair's first honours list was traditional, strong on friends and rich men of a generous disposition. The spin-doctors say this is to change in favour of "hidden merit". Next week's list will be interesting.

Falstaff derided honour as but a word, air, a mere scutcheon. It cannot mend a leg. No, but it can certainly help the body politic to walk. The power of an honour lies in it being available to a Prime Minister not for those who deserve it but specifically for those who do not. An average party leader offers in the region of 1,000 peerages and knighthoods. Tony Benn not implausibly calculates that some 10,000 people in the purlieus of politics must be in thrall to those holding this patronage. They are not corrupt. But as they near a gong their actions acquire a dusting of caution, a light bloom of deference. They want it so badly.

Those who want something badly cede power to those who can give it. Why else do leaders so jealously hold on to this ostensibly trivial task? To government, the system is a benefit conferred without cost. By hiding behind Crown privilege Downing Street need not account publicly for "the list". The process is secret and liable to infinite corruption. As the honours reformer John Grigg wrote in 1993: "Nobody holding the job of Prime Minister ... could fail to abuse the honours system to some degree. The temptation is too great to be resisted by any human being."

Since in this matter only the powerless are reformers, I offer my own modest proposal. The only way of ending abuse is to detach the awarding of honours from the wielding of political power. It must be removed from Downing Street. If the Conservative or Labour parties wish to reward donors or loyalists, they should find a other means, not hijack the good name of the State. There is patronage aplenty in Downing Street without polluting the honours list.

An idea once put forward by *The Economist* was to convert the covert sale into an open one. A restricted number of titles would be sold annually at auction. Vast funds would be generated, to be fairly distributed to political parties and to support the monarchy. A more dignified alternative would be to make the Crown the true fount of honour. Names would be submitted to a royal commission appointed by the Royal Household. The commission would assume Downing Street's vetting role and there would be no Prime Minister's or Opposition Leader's "list".

The monarchy would thus be performing a proper function of the head of state, as the nation collectively recognised meritorious work by its citizens. Such a reform would enhance the status of monarchy. It would make awards for merit seem fair, which they surely should be. The taint of political sycophancy would be removed from titles. An Augean stable of government would be cleansed.

The smart response is to declare that since the system is no better or worse than it has ever been, leave it alone. The honours list has always been infused with mediocrity and corruption. It pours a drop of oil on the mechanism of the body politic. It is harmless. Such cynicism cannot be faulted, given the current public regard for politics. But in that case we might be spared the humbug about rooting out sleaze.

Beware of Capra corn

Michael Gove on the flawed myth of It's a Wonderful Life

Bored by formulaic telly, and jaded by modern cinema, audiences are apparently opting this Christmas for a film with a nostalgic feel and a contemporary message. *It's a Wonderful Life* is supposedly a reminder of Hollywood's Golden Age and an epic for our new Giving Age. It's just a pity that *It's a Wonderful Life* is a truly terrible film. As art it is cheap, and as propaganda just plain pernicious.

It is meant to be a simple tale of Middle American heroism with a protagonist who sacrifices his ambitions in order to run the family mortgage business and frustrate a wily capitalist. An accident brings him close to ruin but he is redeemed by the intervention of a kindly angel, who shows how his home town of Bedford Falls would have suffered had he not been there to protect it. The film ends with the hero, played by James Stewart with his endearing drawl and the affecting catch in his voice, saved by the generosity of those whom he has helped.

It should be a testament to self-sacrifice. It is, however, a hymn to mediocrity, a paean to protectionism, an assault on the best of America and a celebration of suffocation.

America's greatness, the prosperity of its people and its place as a beacon of freedom rests on the restlessness, the unassuagable ambition of its best citizens. Stewart's character, George Bailey, yearns to do "something big", but instead of lassoing the Moon he devotes his energies to running the family firm. Rather than making his mark on the biggest canvas available he prefers to doodle in the margins. This is not just a squandering of spirit, but an unfortunate endorsement of the gentlemanly rentier at the expense of the genuinely wealth-creating buccaneer. George Bailey is a Baring without balls.

It's a Wonderful Life stands in blind romantic opposition to the emancipating force of competition. Its real hero should be Henry Potter, the man with frontier spirit, whose horizons extend beyond his own backyard.

In the movie's apparently most powerful sequence George Bailey is shown a vision of what might have befallen Bedford Falls if he had never lived and Potter had been given the opportunity to develop the backwater. The nightmare image of the garish, striplit, Pottertown is supposed to be a glimpse of the Inferno, with George as Dante and his angel as Virgil. Pottertown, however, is no Hell but instead a honky-tonk Heaven to rank with Forties Hollywood.

Try as the director Frank Capra might to paint this town a sinful red, the camera cannot help but dwell on the delights of the free-wheeling, cheap-drinking speakeasy atmosphere of Pottertown. That is because it is, at bottom, a far more attractive place than the communitarian dreamland of Bedford Falls, just as liberty is always preferable to constriction, however enlightened. If it were not so, then Capra would have become a monk, not a movie-maker.

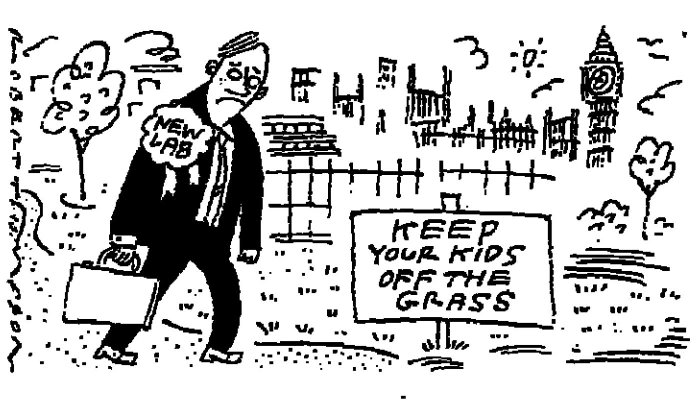
It is time to look at Capra's work with a clear eye, and see him as he is — Pat Buchanan with a soft-focus lens, a Peoria Poujadist who believes small is beautiful but ends up celebrating not just the local but the narrow. If you want a release from reality this Christmas, then you are better off watching a film that genuinely celebrates sturdy individualism in the face of a real enemy — the best escape is *The Great Escape*.

Santa stuck

THAT OLD daredevil Father Christmas almost came upstuck at Southwark Cathedral during Midnight Mass attempting one exploit too far. Santa made a Christmas Eve appearance at the South London cathedral to mark the departure of the Right Rev Roy Williamson, the bishop, at the end of the month. As the service reached its climax, a door opened in the belfry, a rope dropped to the floor and Father Christmas, aka a professional climber, began abseiling earthwards, with a bag of presents tied to his belt. About halfway down, however, his white beard became entwined in the harness, to which he was attached, and he became stuck, hanging in mid-air like the Archangel Gabriel. Realising his predicament, Father Christmas cut his sack free, and it dropped into the outstretched arms of a priest 40ft below. He attempted to climb back up, but to no avail and then struggled, equally unsuccessfully, to free his beard from the rope.

Hanging out: Santa, the bishop

"As he was clearly stuck, the service carried on," said one of the congregation. "He was still hanging there as the bishop went on his final procession." Once the service was finished, hands appeared at the top of the rope and, after a 20-minute struggle, hauled Father Christmas back into the rafters. Hardly inspirational, but at least the service did not encounter the traditional disruption at midnight Mass: drunks in the pews singing carols off-key.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● *A STONE circle is to be installed outside the Serpentine Gallery in Hyde Park in memory of its late patron, Diana, Princess of Wales. The sculptor, Ian Hamilton Finlay — a sensitive, Scottish sort of chap — has added a little, but some might think rather direct, inscription: "To those who love solitude, the pensive, the melancholy and the amorous."*

If only ...

IF ONLY Lord Lawson of Blaby's telephone manner had been more polished as a young man, we might never have heard of "negative equity". A book by Sir Gordon Newton, the *Financial Times* Editor between 1949 and 1972, explains why he was not succeeded by Lawson. The man who was to be Margaret Thatcher's most charismatic Chancellor was editing *The Spectator* in the late 1960s and was Newton's preferred successor. But one day in 1970, Lawson received a call from Garrett Drogheda, the *FT*'s managing director, who offered him the editorship of the *Investor's Chronicle*. Lawson considered the *FT*'s weekly stablemate as "indifferent" and responded that he would take the job only if he were guaranteed to succeed Newton. Drogheda was so offended by Lawson's presumptive manner that he was, according to Newton's book, determined the young hack should never take over at the *FT*. The rest, including the boom and bust in the property market, is history.

NEW TIMES
MODERNISATION was far from the thoughts of the Queen in her first Christmas broadcast in 1952 "With a new faith in the old and splendid beliefs given us by our forefathers, and the strength to venture beyond the safeties of the past, I know we shall be worthy of our duty."

Saw point

PRIVACY is at last assured for the ageing Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richard: he has won a campaign to stop a copse of trees being axed next to his home in West Wittering. After months of protest from Richard and his fellow porch-protectors, Chichester District Council has refused applications from two local businessmen to do any clearance work. The more stalwart campaigners have been heard to complain that the move comes too late — the entrepreneurs felled 52 trees before the ban.

● *BBC LOBBY hacks, gently jostling for the right to succeed Robin Oakley as Political Editor, are about to be joined by a new face. John Kampfner, a political correspondent of* The Financial Times, *will join the team after finishing his biography of Robin Cook. Word at the BBC is that Kampfner will have a "special customised training programme" to allow him to bring "a more reflective style" to the Beeb's outlook. I am sure that John Sargeant, Huw Edwards and Jon Sopel, his ambitious BBC colleagues, are thoroughly looking forward to his arrival.*

High Roller

NORMALLY, barristers don't mind displays of conspicuous consumption. But Edward Hess's arrival at Temple Bar in a luxurious black Rolls-Royce, replete with chauffeur, television, drinks cabinet and escorting manservant, is upsetting some of his peers. Rather than an example of raking in the legal aid, the vehicle is actually provided to assist Hess in his evening job as the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea. But a legal type complains: "This car entirely blocks Middle Temple Lane. Who does he think he is, Lord Irvine?"

OLD TIMES
A STATUE of Lenin is to go on sale at Sotheby's. The bust, weighing five tons, once sat in a small Latvian square, and is expected to fetch more than £18,000. Jackie Rees, one of their statue experts, says: "We hope for a buyer who has an interest in 20th-century politics."

Lord Glenarthur beefed it up, Bottomley talked turkey

FESTIVE TIMES
DURING the decade when she was in power, Virginia Bottomley always politely declined to play host to her famously-extended family during the festive season. But with the demise of her ministerial career, she opted this Christmas to take on the monumental task of providing for her tribe — all 22 of them, as it turned out. "When the red boxes were around, I could not possibly be bothered to think about cooking a turkey," explained the former Heritage Secretary. "But as soon I was in opposition, I thought I would have them all round. I have to say, though, cooking the turkey ended up a good deal harder than working my way through the red boxes."

Lord Glenarthur, who was also once a Tory minister, was in equally festive mood, but for him politics remained firmly on the agenda. Helping to raise funds for charity at the annual Joy to the World concert at the Albert Hall, the former DHSS minister was about to lead ten lords a leaping on to the stage during a rendition of the *Twelve Days of Christmas* televised by BBC1. While the producer's back was turned, Glenarthur — a stout supporter of the Sussex Cattle Society — pinned a placard on the hindquarters of a pantomine cow that was accompanying the eight maids a milking. As the creature's *derrière* filled the screen on Christmas Eve, viewers were able to read: "Sussex Beef is Best."

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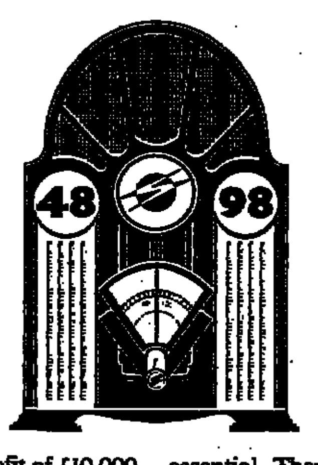
LONDON CALLING

The Olympics are slowly returning to the spirit of '48

In an exceptionally difficult year, Britain was brightened during 1948 by the arrival of the Olympic Games held in London. The city had been scheduled to host the tournament four years earlier but the Second World War rudely intervened. London triumphed over competing bids from Detroit, Lausanne and Rome to stage them belatedly. Conducted in the aftermath of bloody conflict, in an era of rationing and restraint, and with the memory of Berlin 12 years earlier still strong, the London Olympics deliberately returned to the values that had inspired the 1896 revival of the Games. Fifty years on, a similar spirit of sporting "back to basics" appears to inspire those planning today for the next Olympiad in Sydney.



The 1948 Games were marked throughout by austerity. There were no expensive new stadiums erected. The Olympic "Village" consisted of revamped RAF and Army camps for men and halls of residence from London University for women. The budget for the entire enterprise was £600,000. The Attlee Government had no intention of subsidising the spectacle. A profit of £10,000 was ultimately realised.

For all that, and the understandable absence of Germany and Japan, a record 59 nations entered and the exercise seized the public imagination. The undoubted star was Fanny Blankers-Koen, the Dutch housewife, mother and sprinter-supreme who stormed her way to four gold medals. These strikingly cheap Games were also extremely cheerful.

After that, the Olympics progressively became a monster media extravaganza. In the process this noble ideal sacrificed some of its soul. The successful launch of communications satellites permitted worldwide television coverage. The Moscow and Los Angeles Olympics of 1980 and 1984 were marked by boycotts from the West and Warsaw Pact respectively. An amateur occasion was ambushed — almost overnight — by the power of pure professionalism. Almost every sport (loosely defined) demanded inclusion, too often successfully. The Seoul Games of 1988 were unrecognisable from the London gathering four decades earlier.

The Atlanta Games of 1996 represented the pinnacle of this process. A total of 29 sports — including such innovations as beach volleyball — and 271 events were forced into a frantic fortnight. The sheer intensity of the commercialism shocked even modernisers in the Olympic movement. The Atlanta Olympics virtually collapsed under the strain of their self-imposed weight. Even before the bombing in Centennial Park, it was obvious that the transit network of the city could not cope. The International Olympic Committee, not the most reflective of institutions, finally realised that dramatic action was essential. There are signs that Sydney, the host city in 2000, will attempt to shift back towards the values and emphasis of London. It has deliberately declined to accept more sports, events and competitors than its American predecessor. The Australians, rightly, aim to involve the athletes themselves more intimately in their planning. A small step towards sanity will be undertaken. In the modern era it is quite impossible to return outright to austerity and amateurism. Nor would this be advisable even if it were practicable. It is, however, possible to resist the rush in the opposite direction. The spirit of 1948 should still be the torch for the Olympic movement.

FOXING DAY

A clash of cultures disguised as a difference of opinion

The conflict between hunters and protesters has become an unofficial element of the Christmas season. This was once again true yesterday. The atmosphere has become especially intense in the aftermath of the massive majority in the House of Commons last month for Michael Foster's Wild Mammals (Hunting With Dogs) Bill. The Government has offered no clear indication yet on how it will proceed. If it does not allocate extra time, then this legislation will fall. If it does, it could enter law quickly. This year's Boxing Day meetings might then be the last legal events of this kind.

Although turnouts have obviously varied, there was evidence in some places that the Foster Bill brought out record numbers on both sides. For all the heated discussion about the character of the fox and the nature of the hunt, other passions explain the power of this issue. This clash is a symptom of tensions between town and country, as well as of the class struggle for which conventional politics no longer provides an outlet. Many in rural Britain perceive the campaign against hunting as part of a wider broadside from an arrogant urban majority.

Opponents argue, as Mr Foster did, that the Boxing Day chase reveals the degree to which foxhunting is essentially "entertainment" for the benefit of a self-selected social minority. Some go much further, implying that foxes (presumably along with all other animals) should enjoy human, or even divine, rights. The Christian Socialist Movement, a 5,000-strong organisation affiliated to the Labour Party, has published a pamphlet attacking foxhunting on religious grounds. Christopher Bryant, chairman of the pressure group, compares the pastime to "slavery, the Crusades, and apartheid". Martin Palmer, author of the missive, claims that the practice could be compared to the "Crucifixion of Christ". These statements are intemperate, to put it mildly. Quite why the Son of God chose to spend so much time with fishermen also remains a mystery.

The hunting issue is likely to become even more serious next year and the year after if the Government determines to support Mr Foster's legislation or a successor Bill. The police have historically held the ring between the huntsmen and the protesters. In future, they may be asked to arrest large numbers of local people who will insist on their rights to continue with a sport which has been practised for centuries. A Government that came to office with a pledge to crack down on crime and its causes would have created a whole new category of potential offenders. The resulting spectacle would not be attractive.

For that reason, the Prime Minister would be well advised to proceed with caution. His best option remains a Countryside Commission to examine all aspects of field sports, including foxhunting. It is essential to settle the question of what size the fox population should be if other species of animal are not to suffer unduly. It is also crucial to quantify the scale of cull necessary if foxhunting were abolished, and the methods required to achieve it. At the moment, this issue is a clash of cultures disguised as a difference of opinion. It will remain so until the full facts enter the field.

SHOP TILL YOU STOP

A war of nerves continues between shopkeepers and consumers

Government statisticians invariably observe a surge in Britain's money supply in December each year. The regularity of this empirical observation led Lord Kaldor, the celebrated Keynesian economist of the 1960s, to remark that "at last monetary economics has discovered the cause of Christmas". These days, predicting the behaviour of consumers, or even the real timing of what economists call Christmas, has become more complex, as many of Britain's shopkeepers are finding to their cost.

Saddled with billions of pounds' worth of unsold stocks, panicky shopkeepers have been plastering "Sale" signs across Britain's high streets even before Christmas. Economists, who had spent the previous month bemoaning a slack Christmas and wondering why prices of imported goods — from shoes and toys to garden tools and computers — had not fallen even lower in response to the strong pound, are now predicting a record-breaking season of January sales and enormous price cuts. The truth is that nobody knows what shoppers have done or intend to do over Christmas. The holiday shopping season has changed from a stylised ritual into a deadly serious game of chicken between canny retailers and even more cannier consumers.

Christmas shopping these days is more akin to a military campaign than a military parade. People used to troop off to the shops with military precision in mid-December and then retreat for a well-earned period of rest and recuperation after Boxing Day. It was only after a week to digest their turkeys and tinker with their children's malfunctioning toys that consumers would regroup for the second stage of their great winter shopping campaigns.

Today, however, neither consumers and shopkeepers, nor economists and monetary officials, can enjoy the luxury of such relaxed behaviour. Shoppers leave the Christmas sorties to the last moment, in the hope that the retailers' nerves will snap, along with their prices, in the 24 hours before Christmas. Some shopkeepers respond by insisting on the highest possible prices, even at the cost of lower sales, before Christmas, knowing that the big battalions of really serious shoppers will only come out of their bunkers after December 26. Other retailers try the opposite approach — announcing sales and discount offers at the very start of the holiday season, insisting (implausibly) that such special offers will be snatched away at the stroke of midnight on December 25 or December 31.

Vexing as it is for retailers, such unpredictable behaviour is equally annoying for economists and government officials who try to base their policy decisions on wildly conflicting rumours about the true balance of forces on the high street front. There seems to be only one solution: some kind of non-aggression pact between shopkeepers and consumers. Perhaps retailers should stop overcharging before Christmas, only to be left with mountains of stock. Consumers should expect to pay sensible prices, whether they buy their goods in December, January or any other month.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

BSE: questions of responsibility

From Mr David Gladstone

Sir, You may be distracting the forthcoming BSE inquiry from the most important issue (leading article, December 23).

If Lord Justice Phillips's inquiry finds only "three candidates for public contempt", ie, that some in the beef industry engaged in potentially poisonous practices; that the MAFF leant over backwards to help farmers; or that some scientists played fast and loose with the parameters of certainty, then we shall have learnt nothing new.

What we need to know more about — because it will affect future policies — is the part played by a belief in deregulation for its own sake. Did the Government of the day change, or connive at the non-observance of, the rules previously in force governing the treatment of cattle feed?

The Phillips report will fail to satisfy this reader for one if it leaves the politicians altogether out of the reckoning.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GLADSTONE,
1 Mountfort Terrace, N1 1JJ.
December 23.

From Mr Aidan Harrison

Sir, Your list of potential candidates for contempt over the BSE fiasco is, in my view, wide of the mark in one respect, in that I believe beef farmers are the victims.

BSE and any resulting risk to human health from CJD come from one avenue of food production: high-protein animal feeds, intensive dairy farming, worn-out cows and processed products made from their mechanically recovered meat.

Yet an entirely separate, innocent industry — the traditional, ecological and sustainable production of fresh beef, naturally reared on grass, silage and cereals — faces ruin because of the officially sanctioned activities of others.

I trust that Lord Justice Phillips will recognise what politicians and their scientific advisers have failed to understand for over nine years.

Yours faithfully,
AIDAN HARRISON
(Beef farmer),
Morrelhirst,
Netherwitton, Morpeth NE61 4PT.
December 23.

From Mr Philip King

Sir, May I suggest two questions for the forthcoming inquiry into the origins and handling of the BSE crisis that has cost the taxpayer £4 billion and caused financial hardship for farmers?

Who are the agro-chemical companies responsible for manufacturing and supplying the contaminated animal feed that is said to have been the causative agent for BSE in cattle?

Are these companies likely to be sued for compensation by the Government and the National Farmers' Union, or will they be allowed to escape the consequences of their actions?

Yours sincerely,
PHILIP KING,
15 Oakridge Drive,
East Finchley, N2 8DF.
December 23.

College fees

From Mr Elliot Vaughn

Sir, Given that £178 million is wasted by students dropping out of higher education (report, December 17), is it worth noting that, at 96.5 per cent, Cambridge University has the highest completion rate in the country?

The college system provides an excellent foundation for pastoral care: there is a large network of support for students, both within the college environment and within the larger university. As a students' union, we are concerned that the welfare network would be the first thing to be cut back if the college fees were to be reduced.

At £17 million, the cost of its college fees, Cambridge is expensive in the short term; but it is ten times less expensive than other universities that let their students down.

Yours faithfully,
ELLIOT VAUGHN
(Welfare officer),
Cambridge University
Students' Union,
11/12 Trumpington Street,
Cambridge CB2 1QA.
December 17.

Squirrel cull

From Mr Andrew Wells

Sir, I was interested to read that, according to the RSPCA, the killing of squirrels is "not strictly illegal" (News in brief, December 16).

I was under the impression that it was not at all illegal. Indeed, as squirrels cause severe harm to the population of small birds by raiding their nests, their killing can justifiably be encouraged.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW WELLS,
6 New Covenant Place,
Rochester, Kent ME1 1BA.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

Radar expert's wartime high point

From Dom Alberic Stacpoole, OSB

Sir, Your excellent obituary of Professor R. V. Jones (December 19), alas, does not dwell on a famous high point in his life, the morale-lifting Bruneval raid of February 1942. Yet your photograph of him has in the background a narrow-beam Würzburg defence radar, such as was captured in that raid, which was launched at the instigation of Dr Jones. It yielded, he said, virtually all the information he ever gathered on those radars.

The individuals shown standing in front of the equipment include John Frost, in 1942 officer commanding the raiding party from 2 Parachute Regiment, in 1944 CO of 2 Para holding the Arnhem Bridge and a major-general when he died, aged 80, in 1993; and Flight Sergeant Charles Cox, principal radar mechanic on the raid, who died two months ago, aged 84.

The Würzburgs were causing our bombers increasing losses in late 1941, tracking their arrival and guiding their own interceptor fighters. A chain of radar posts had been built along the French coast, heavily disguised. The Bruneval one was selected for capture. Cox found dismantling it quite easy, since the radar was built in prefabricated parts.

A German operator was also captured, and was glad to spend an afternoon helping Dr Jones to fit the pieces together. Jones thereby discovered the limits of the wavelength tuning and the fact that there was no built-in counter-jamming device.

Bruneval is The Parachute Regiment's first battle honour. The success of that raid directly caused the full expansion of parachute forces in 1942.

Yours faithfully,
A. J. STACPOOLE
(2 Parachute Regiment, 1954-57),
Ampleforth Abbey, York YO6 4EN.

From Dr E. H. Putley

Sir, It is true, as stated in your obituary, that there were those who regarded research on infra-red (IR) as a threat to the timely development of RDF (radar, as it is now called), but this was not the reason for R. V. Jones's secondment to the Admiralty in 1938.

In an effort to make the most effective use of our limited scientific effort the Admiralty had agreed to undertake infra-red research on behalf of the three Services. As a contribution to this effort the Air Ministry agreed to second to the Admiralty their leading expert, Dr Jones.

Unfortunately, although the possibility of utilising IR (as first pointed out by Lord Cherwell in 1915) was fundamentally sound, the requisite technology was still in its infancy and, although there were some limited applications of IR in the Second World War, it was not until well after the end of the war that its full potential could be realised. Jones then returned to IR research, contributing to the foundations on which modern IR technology has been built.

Yours sincerely,
ERNEST PUTLEY,
20 Cockshot Road, Malvern,
Worcestershire WR14 2TT.
December 19.

Charitable partnership

From Mr Stephen Beard

Sir, To Matthew Parris's recent article complaining about tax relief given to charities (December 12; see also letters, December 19), and Frank Prochaska's spirited response of December 18, I would add what I believe to be a far more serious challenge facing the voluntary sector.

With government increasingly withdrawing from funding in areas such as health, education and social welfare, there is a growing need for charitable giving to take up this shortfall. As we approach the new millennium, the business and professional community is far better placed than any other section of society to assist the voluntary sector in carrying out its vital work.

Yet average cash donations to charity from British companies only amount to some 0.08 per cent of its profits (article, September 3); this does not stand comparison with the contributions made by industry in the US. Clearly, even without tax concessions, the UK business community urgently needs to reassess its obligation to make a more significant contribution in this field.

Similarly, there is also a need for the voluntary sector to recognise that there are too many charities in the UK and that a shake-up of this sector is overdue. This should go a long way to convince the business community that it has greater social responsibilities than it would currently appear to appreciate.

The work of local community foundations is an important preliminary to the partnership required between the business community and the voluntary sector to ensure that the invaluable work of the latter continues into the next millennium.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN BEARD,
39 Second Avenue,
Mortlake, SW14 8QF.
December 23.

EU challenge

From Dr David J. Timson

Sir, Is the European Union so unpopular that the Government must spend taxpayers' money on indoctrinating schoolchildren?

When I read (report, December 18) that a competition is planned for which children must create a project extolling the supposed virtues of ever closer union for young people, then I know that the Government has resorted to desperate, and worrying, measures.

I presume that an entry highlighting the destruction of the British fishing industry and the loss of UK economic sovereignty inherent in monetary union would not be a winner.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID J. TIMSON,
1 Kingsway Court,
Kidlington,
Oxfordshire OX2 5NL.
December 18.

Identity coyness

From Mr R. G. Maling

Sir, In today's announcement of the intention to include photographs on driving licences from next summer, the Transport Ministry is reported as stating "they will not become identity cards". Why the coyness? In numerous instances of everyday life we are asked to provide a form of identity, the passport or driving licence being quoted as acceptable.

The Government's response to its own discussion document, *Government.direct*, implies that a name and number do not constitute identity. For heaven's sake; why, as military personnel, were we issued with "dog-tags", carrying name and number, to wear around our necks under all circumstances?

Yours faithfully,
R. G. MALING,
Windfall, 11 Chalkshire Road,
Butlers Cross, Aylesbury HP17 0TS.
December 19.

Legal 'fat cats'

From Mr Andy Smith

Sir, As Mr J. D. H. Heath's partners are "entitled" to a slice of his income (letter, December 22), he is presumably "entitled" to a similar share of theirs. Also, the fixed costs of his office are an irrelevance in calculating his earnings, since he has to pay these in any event.

At £61.75 per hour I regard the Lord Chancellor's case as proven beyond reasonable doubt. Perhaps this reflects a fundamental difference in perspective.

Yours faithfully,
ANDY SMITH,
1 Mill Cottages, Rugby CV21 1BX.
andy.smith@coventry.ac.uk

From Mr David Pearson

Sir, If all that Mr Heath can make out of a fee of £61.75 is a paltry 73p, then his firm must be unbelievably inefficient. Or is he unwittingly revealing why the law is so expensive?

Perhaps we should now be charitable towards the £200,000 per annum barrister who, on the same calculation, would only earn in the region of £2,000 and be on income support.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID PEARSON,
56 Windermere Avenue,
Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8RY.
December 22.

From Mrs Judith Evans

Sir, All Mr John Heath's sleeping partners gain a share of his fee for his idle wait at the police station at 2am. Where does one apply to join their ranks?

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH EVANS,
130 Abbots Road, Abbots Langley,
Hertfordshire WD5 0BL.
December 23.

Directions, please

From Mrs Christine Stephens

Sir, After queueing on the M25 for nearly two hours recently I left at an unfamiliar exit to seek petrol and a telephone. Would it not be sensible to indicate the nearest garage at all motorway exits, or do other motorists have an extra sense with which I am not blest?

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE STEPHENS,
10 Linfields,
Little Chalfont HP7 9QH.

Really useful names

From Mr David R. Wright

Sir, Your analysis of the choice of boys' names (report, December 22) omits one key factor: three of the five most popular names come from the *Thomas the Tank Engine* books.

I remain, Sir,
your obedient namespotter,
DAVID R. WRIGHT,
19 Birchfield Lane,
Mulbarton, Norwich NR14 8BS.
djwright@dircon.co.uk
December 22.

Bread and wine as symbols of faith

From the Chairman of the Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England

Sir, Ruth Gledhill may be right (report, December 23) that "many Anglicans believe the bread and the wine [of the Eucharist] to be mere symbols of the body and blood of Christ". Unfortunately for her argument, there are individual members of all Churches who hold idiosyncratic beliefs. The question of eucharistic doctrine is best judged not by anecdotal evidence of what individual believers think, but by the official formularies of the Churches and ecumenical agreements between them.

Neither the Roman Catholic Church nor the Anglican Communion, which includes both the Church of England and the Church of Ireland, stands today precisely where they stood at the time of the Reformation. It is important not to oversimplify the Sacraments. Nevertheless, in the words of one of the texts of the final report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, officially approved by both Churches, we read:

> before the eucharistic prayer, to the question: "what is that?", the believer answers: "it is bread". After the eucharistic prayer, to the same question he answers: "it is truly the body of Christ, the bread of life".

Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has written of the agreement on eucharistic doctrine that "no further study would seem to be required at this stage".

Yours sincerely,
†JOHN HIND,
Chairman, Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England,
Church House,
Great Smith Street, SW1P 3BZ.
johnhind@compuserve.com
December 23.

From Mr Leonard Scott

Sir, I was slightly mollified that your religion correspondent qualified her statement by saying: "*Many* Anglicans believe the bread and wine to be mere symbols" (my italics).

This may well be so. What I know for a fact is that there are substantial numbers of Anglican Catholics, myself among them, who believe, along with other Catholics, that there is no reason to suppose that the words of Our Lord repeated daily in the Eucharist — "This is my body . . . This is my blood" — mean anything other than what they plainly say.

Yours faithfully,
L. SCOTT,
Rue du Bois du Greffier 11,
B-1380 Lasne, Belgium.

From Mr Gavin Lloyd

Sir, The Church of Ireland has had a long and honourable history of hospitality towards worshippers of other traditions at her Communion services. I was therefore sorry to read that one of her members felt that President McAleese's taking Communion at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, was an empty gesture (letter, December 23). In this act of worship it seems to me that in one gesture the Church of Ireland has (unlike her English sister Church) shown herself to be truly Anglican — and Mary McAleese truly Catholic.

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN LLOYD,
60 Merton Road, Ambrosden,
Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 0LZ.
December 23.

Ghosts in common

From Mrs Jean McCormick

Sir, I was interested to read about the ghost of Francis Dawes (report, December 19), who hanged himself at Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1789.

Some 25 years ago I was living in a house which had been built in 1853 by a Dr Dawes, a keen astronomer and a member of the Royal Society, who was buried in the local churchyard. One night to my amazement, and contrary to my strongly held religious tenets, I saw a ghost standing at the top of the stairs and for several weeks afterwards we experienced strange knockings and pictures falling off the walls.

Our local bishop, who came to advise us, said these experiences are much more common than people realise and he thought the ghost was very likely that of Dr Dawes come back to finish some work. Apparently on his deathbed he had been engaged in some mathematical calculations to do with his astronomical studies.

It would be curious if the Francis Dawes of Peterhouse was in fact a distant relative of the Dr Dawes I saw. Maybe the ability to revisit the living runs in families.

Yours faithfully,
JEAN McCORMICK,
17 River Green, Hamble SO31 4JA.

. . . and roundabouts

From Mr David Cleary

Sir, Today's front-page headline reads: "Public swings in favour of the Prince". We know that the Prince is reputed to converse with plants but fancy MORI conducting a popularity poll among playground equipment.

Yours,
DAVID CLEARY,
41 Rugby Road, Dunchurch,
Warwickshire CV22 6PG.
cleary3@compuserve.com
December 24.

[illegible]

SOCIAL NEWS

The Prince Edward will visit Japan from Monday, January 19, to Saturday, January 24, to open the UK '98 Festival.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY:
Miss Anne Armstrong, former American diplomat, 70; Viscount Astor, 46; Sir Gordon Brunton, former president, International Thomson Organisation, 76; Mr Gerard Depardieu, actor, 49; Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach, 56; Air Chief Marshal Sir Derek Hodgkinson, 80; Viscount Knutsford, 71; Miss Pat Moss, former rally driver, 63; Professor D.H. Northcote, FRS, former Master, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, 76; Sir William Purves, banker, 66; Professor B.R. Rees, former Principal, St David's University College, Lampeter, 78; Sir Norman Reid, former director, Tate Gallery, 82; Dr E.C. Salthouse, Master, University College, Durham, 62; Lord Sterling of Plaistow, 63; Miss Janet Street-Porter, broadcaster, 51; Miss Polly Toynbee, journalist and broadcaster, 51; the Right Rev A.M.A. Turnbull, Bishop of Durham, 62.

TOMORROW:
Air Commodore Molly Allott, former director, WRAF, 79; Mr D.B. Carr, former cricketer, 71; Miss Madeleine Craggs, former secretary, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 52; Mr T.W. Gould, VC, 83; Mr Max Hastings, Editor, *Evening Standard*, 52; Lord Hattersley, 65; Mr Noël Johnson, actor, 81; Professor F.P. Kelly, FRS, statistician, 47; Mr Nigel Kennedy, violinist, 41; Mr Martin Llowarch, chairman, Transport Development Group, 62; Mr Michael J.P. Marks, deputy chairman, Merrill Lynch International, and chief operating officer, Merrill Lynch Europe and the Middle East, 56; Mr Michael Marland, educationist, 63; Mrs Frances Morrell, former leader, ILEA, 60; Sir Patrick O'Connor, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 83; Mr Simon Raven, author and dramatist, 70; Mrs Joan Ruddock, MP, 54; Dame Maggie Smith, actress, 63; Mr Denzel Washington, actor, 43; the Right Rev W.J. Westwood, former Bishop of Peterborough, 72; the Hon Geoffrey Wilson, former chairman, Delta Group, 68; the Marquess of Zetland, 60.

Anniversaries

TODAY
BIRTHS: Johannes Kepler, astronomer, Weil der Stadt, Germany, 1571; Sir George Cayley, pioneer of aerodynamics, Scarborough, 1773; Louis Pasteur, chemist and bacteriologist, Dôle, France, 1822.

DEATHS: Pierre de Ronsard, poet, Tours, 1585; George Barrington, pickpocket and writer, Parramatta, New South Wales, 1804; William Jay, dissenting minister, Bath, 1853; William Armstrong, Baron Armstrong, inventor, Northumberland, 1900; William Archer, journalist and dramatic critic, London, 1924; Sergy Yesenin, poet, Leningrad, 1925; Max Beckmann, Expressionist painter, New York, 1950; Lester Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada 1963-68, Nobel Peace laureate 1957, Ottawa, 1972; Houari Boumedienne, President of Algeria 1965-78, Algiers, 1978; Hoagy Carmichael, pianist and composer, Palm Springs, California, 1981.

Charles Darwin set sail in *HMS Beagle* from Plymouth on his voyage of scientific discovery, 1831.

The first performance of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* took place at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, 1904.

The International Monetary Fund was established, Washington, 1945.

The Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts came into effect in Britain, 1975.

TOMORROW
BIRTHS: Alexander Keith Johnston, geographer, Penicuik, 1804; Samuel Phillips, journalist, 1814; Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th American President 1913-21, Staunton, Virginia, 1856; Pio Baroja y Nessi, novelist, San Sebastian, Spain, 1872; Sir Arthur Eddington, astronomer, Kendal, Cumbria, 1882.

DEATHS: St Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church, 1622; Queen Mary II, reigned with King William III 1689-94, London, 1694; Pierre Bayle, philosopher, 1706; Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay, poet, historian and statesman, London, 1859; George Gissing, novelist, St-Jean de Luz, France, 1903; Maurice Ravel, composer, Paris, 1937; Theodore Dreiser, novelist, Hollywood, 1945; Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy 1900-46, Egypt, 1947; Jack Lovelock, surgeon, Olympic 1500m gold medallist 1936, killed in an accident, New York, 1949; Paul Hindemith, composer, Frankfurt am Main, 1963.

The Tay Bridge collapsed as a train from Edinburgh to Dundee was crossing it, killing all 300 on board, 1879.

The first weather reports relayed by wireless telegraphy were published in London, 1904.

The Peak District was designated Britain's first National Park, 1950.

Latest wills

Sir Charles Spencer Richard **Graham**, Bt, former Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria, President of Country Landowners Association 1971-73, of Longtown, Carlisle, left estate valued at £454,613 net.

Sir David Armand **Hopkin**, of London N7, Chief Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate, 1982-92, President of the British Boxing Board of Control from 1991, left estate valued at £228,780 net.

Queenie May **Bowerman**, of Pewsey, Wiltshire, left estate valued at £1,114,273 net.

Sarah **Bright**, of Bournemouth, Dorset, left estate valued at £1,397,098 net.

Dennis Clifford **Duckitt**, stockbroker, of Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, left estate valued at £1,796,333 net.

William Alfred **Colledge**, of Christchurch, Dorset, left estate valued at £1,172,121 net.
He left £2,000 to the Macmillan Cancer Trust of Christchurch, £1,000 to RSPCA.

Alister Congreve **Hall**, farmer, of Hales, Market Drayton, Shropshire, left estate valued at £1,560,726 net.

Michael Douglas Sutcliffe **Hood**, of Walberton, West Sussex, left estate valued at £1,071,428 net.

Margaret Owen Gordon **Atkin**, of Sheffield, left estate valued at £554,010 net.

Edmund **Garvey**, of Scarborough, left estate valued at £539,939 net.

David **Mitchell**, of Aspatria, Cumbria, left estate valued at £944,282 net.

ANDRÉ CAMARA

Tracey Holman and Simon Bentley, of southwest London, who have recently announced their engagement

University news

Oxford

Somerville College
The following elections have been agreed:

To a Bull Scholarship in Classics: Alan Brendan Connery (formerly of Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, London)

To a Coombs Scholarship in PPE: Stefan Dobrev, Sofia High School of Mathematics

To an Ethel E Jones Scholarship in English: Rachel Curzon, Boston Spa Comprehensive, W Yorks.

To a Nuffield Scholarship in Engineering: Claire Louise Williams, Mander Portman Woodward, Cambs.

To a Nuffield Scholarship in Chemistry: Arran Alexander Dickon Tulloch, Bedales School.

To a Nuffield Scholarship in Chemistry: David Willman, University College School, London

To a Beilby Exhibition in Physics: Benjamin Russell Booth, Dean Close School

To a Beilby Exhibition in Human Sciences: James Patrick Curley, St Peter's School, York.

To a Beilby Exhibition in Human Sciences: Charlotte Marie Dufour, Lycée International, France.

To a Beilby Exhibition in Human Sciences: Jonathan Sutherland Mill, Colston's Collegiate School, Bristol.

To a Beilby Exhibition in Physics: Alan Owen Saunders, Lawnswood School, Leeds.

To a Beilby Exhibition in Physics: David Zekria, Watford Grammar School for Boys.

To a Coombs Exhibition in Law: Foong May Tai, Jakarta Exhibition in Engineering

To a Nuffield Exhibition in Engineering: Sanjeev Kumar, Christ's College, London.

To a Nuffield Exhibition in Chemistry: Masa Cemazar, UWC Adriatic, Italy.

To a Nuffield Exhibition in Chemistry: Alison Waldron, Roedean School.

To a Coombs Prize in History: Noah Bulkin, Westminster School.

To a Bull Scholarship in English: Rebecca Alexandra Goss, Devonport High School for Girls.

To a Nuffield Scholarship in Medicine: Nika Thandiwe Raphaely, St John's College, Cambridge.

To a Beilby Scholarship in Biochemistry: Robert James Sidell, Weymouth College

To a College Prize in Classics: Isabelle Sterboul, Centre Madeleine Danielou, France.

To a Coombs Prize in English: Thomas David Owen, Bishops Stortford College.

To a Sarah Smithson Prize in Modern Languages: Zoe Moores, Henrietta Barnett School.

To a Sarah Smithson Prize in Modern Languages: Richard John Forrest, Sherborne School.

To a Nicholson Prize in Mathematics: Rowena Elizabeth Paget, Lewis Girls' School.

To a Shared Kirkaldy Prize in Physical Sciences: Arran Alexander Dickon Tulloch, and Tak Yan Cheung, Thomas Mills High School, Suffolk.

London

King's College London

Appointments to Established Chairs

Sarah Cowley to the newly established Chair of Nursing Practice and Evaluation. She was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Nursing Studies at King's.

David Ganz to the Chair of Palaeography. He joins King's from the University of North Carolina, USA, and is the leading world authority on the manuscripts produced as a result of the carolingian renaissance.

Ian Norman to the newly established Chair of Nursing Practice and Inter-Disciplinary Care. He was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Nursing Studies at King's.

Appointments to Personal Chairs

Janet Askham, Senior Research Fellow in the Age Concern Institute of Gerontology to Professor of Social Gerontology.

Robert Blackburn, Reader in Public Law to Professor of Constitutional Law

Clive Bush, Head of the Department of English and Reader in American Literature, to Professor of American Literature.

Christopher Dandeker, Head of the Department of War Studies and Senior Lecturer in War Studies, to Professor of Military Sociology.

Michael Holwill, Reader in Biophysics, to Professor of Biological Physics.

Gareth Jones, Reader in Cell Biology, to Professor of Cell Biology.

Giovanni Mann, Reader in Physiology to Professor of Vascular Physiology.

Yuri Safarov, Reader in Mathematics to Professor of Mathematics.

Peter Williams, Senior Lecturer in Zoology, to Professor of Environmental Science.

Appointment to Newly Established Readerships

Cliff Eisen to a newly established Readership in Historical Musicology. He joins King's from New York University.

Daniel Leech-Wilkinson to a newly established Readership in Historical Musicology. He joins King's from the University of Southampton.

Promotion to Reader

Dr Karim Arafat, Lecturer in Classical Archaeology to Reader in Classical Archaeology.

Dr Julian Baldick, Lecturer in Islamic Studies, to Reader in Islamic Studies.

Dr Ingvar Bjarnason, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Pathology to Reader in Clinical Pathology.

Dr Helen Fielding, Lecturer in Chemistry to Reader in Physical Chemistry.

Dr James Gow, Lecturer in War Studies to Reader in War Studies.

Dr Tom Keenoy, Senior Lecturer in Management to Reader in Management.

Dr Max Saunders, Lecturer in English to Reader in English.

Dr Lakmal Seneviratne, Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering to Reader in Mechatronics.

Dr David Squires, Senior Lecturer in Educational Computing to Reader in Educational Computing.

Dr Alan Turner-Smith, Senior Lecturer in Medical Engineering and Physics to Reader in Rehabilitation Engineering.

Britannia Royal Naval College

A passing out parade was held at Britannia Royal Naval College (Commodore A.P. Masterton-Smith) on Thursday, December 18. Rear Admiral P M Franklyn, Flag Officer Surface Flotilla (FOSF), took the salute. The following officers passed out:

Direct Graduate Entry, Seamen:
Sub Lieutenants S R Bembridge, Wintringham Sch, Grimsby; E N Chacksfield, Solihull Sch, West Midlands; N J Colin-Thorne, Frodsham High Sch, Cheshire; A J Collins, The Lindsey Sch, Cleethorpes; A C Cooney, Nottingham Bluecoat Sch, Aspley; A D Coventry, George Watson College, Edinburgh; W D J Dale, The King's Sch, Worcester; J P Delf, Acle High Sch, Norwich; M P J Densham, Christ's Hospital Sch, Horsham; P L Downing, St Monica's Roman Catholic High Sch, Prestwich; M J Downs, Light Hall Sch, Solihull; M J Hall, Caerleon Comprehensive Sch, Newport; R V R Hay, Tasker-Millward VC Sch, Pembrokeshire; D N McDonald, The Aylesford Sch, Warwick; G J McGowan, Horsforth Sch, Leeds; R J Melhuish, Plymouth College, Devon; P G Monachello, Queen Margaret Academy, Ayr; A T Norgate, Southway Comprehensive Sch, Plymouth; J O'Neill, Cardigan Secondary Sch, Ceredigion; A E Pollard, The Lady Eleanor Holles Sch, Middlesex; B D T Ravenscroft, Bohunt Comprehensive, Hants; S J P Rogers, Seaford Head Sch, East Sussex; N E P Smith, Maidstone Grammar Sch, Kent; M Thomas, Ludlow Sch, Shropshire; D A Timms, Chipping Sodbury Sch, Bristol; A R Towns, King Edward VI Grammar Sch, Chelmsford; G R Willis, Westlands Sch, Torquay.

Naval College Entry, Seamen:
Midshipmen K S Fyfe, Hermitage Academy, Helensburgh; V M Guilfoyle, Stanwell Comprehensive Sch, South Glamorgan; A G Peacock, Purley Sixth Form College, Surrey; D A Walthall, High Street Sch, Tayside.

Direct Graduate Entry, Engineer:
Sub Lieutenants R S Sangha, Reading Sch, Berkshire; M L Thomson, Heaton Manor Sch, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Naval College Entry, Engineers:
Midshipmen M R Jones, Priestlands Sch, Lymington; A R Lovett, Kilsyth Academy, Kilsyth; B D Trueman, Park View Sch, Birmingham.

Direct Graduate Entry, Engineer (Training Management):
Lieutenant A M Roberts, KGV College, Southport; Sub Lieutenant M D Clarke, St Vincent VI Form College, Gosport.

Direct Graduate Entry, Supply:
Sub Lieutenants P J Miles, The Purbeck Upper Sch, Wareham; I D Park, Astley High Sch, Seaton Delaval.

Naval College Entry, Supply:
Midshipman A C Bishop, Humphry Davy Sch, Penzance; C L Clark, Crofton Sch, Fareham; C L Howe, Parkstone Grammar Sch for Girls, Poole; K J Rawlings, The Ridgeway Sch, Swindon; B S Wrigley, Colaiste Muire, Co.Cork.

Direct Graduate Entry, 89 Flight Pilots:
Sub Lieutenants N J Arkle, Ranelagh Sch, Bracknell; J M Ashlin, Nicholas Chamberlaine Comprehensive Sch, Bedworth; S A H Baldie, Barton Peveril VI Form, Eastleigh; N J E Benzie, Cranleigh Sch, Surrey; L F Brazier, Newcastle Royal Grammar Sch, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; T J Cowin, Cranleigh Sch, Surrey; K N Drodge, Sidmouth Community College, Devon; A C Ellis, Newcastle Emlyn Comprehensive, Dyfed; A W Felters, Barden High Sch, Burnley; P E Hanks, Birkenhead Sch, Oxton; B P I Hartley, Oakham Sch, Rutland; G S Johnston, Harris Academy, Dundee; G McCall, The St Augustine's Sch, Redditch; G K Stein, Gordonstoun Sch, Moray; A T Torbet, Harlaw Academy, Aberdeen; J M R Wade, Tonbridge Sch, Kent; A H Walsh, Mark Rutherford Sch, Bedford.

Naval College Entry, 89 Flight Pilots:
Midshipman M R Paulet, St John's College, Zimbabwe.

Direct Graduate Entry, 89 Flight Observers:
Sub Lieutenants D I Iliffe, St John Houghton Roman Catholic Sch, Ilkeston; A S Johnston, Lancing College, Shoreham-by-Sea; M R Tazewell, Kingdown Comprehensive, Warminster.

Naval College Entry, 89 Flight Observer:
Midshipman C Y Moncrieff-Watts, Bristol Grammar Sch, Clifton.

Direct Entry, 89 Flight (Air Traffic Controller):
Sub Lieutenants L Griffin, St Paul's Sch for Girls, Edgbaston; J L Younger, Raincliffe Sch, Scarborough.

Naval College Entry, 89 Flight (Air Traffic Controller):
Midshipmen Z Kroon, Newland Sch for Girls, Hull; D R Pickles, The Ferrers Sch, Northamptonshire.

Internationals Entry 97/2:
Midshipmen A H M Al Yaquout Salah; Al-Ajmi Saud, T A H Al-Farissi, M S A Al-Harbi, M Al-Harshani, F A M Al-Qumaizan, Chatprechakul, Choo Jui Yeang.

Special Duties Course, 3/97:
Lieutenants N C Buckley, Ballymun Comprehensive, Dublin; J Hall, Clarendon Sch, Salford; Sub Lieutenants G J Boon, Llanilltud Fawr Sch, South Glamorgan; F Brown, Landmark Baptist Sch, United States of America; C D Castle, Orton Longueville Comprehensive Sch, Peterborough; M H Connolly, Greenfield Sch, Gwent; A R Cowan, Greenford High Sch, Middlesex; S E Goodrum, Laindon Comprehensive, Basildon; P J Griffin, Ashcroft High Sch, Luton; S M Howells, Cefn Hengoed Comprehensive Sch, Swansea; T W Longstaff, Queen Elizabeth High Sch, Northumberland; H W Lynn, Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Sch, Luton; Lieutenant G A Mills, Knowsley St Augustine of Canterbury Sch, Merseyside; M Munroe, Robinson Road Sch, New Providence; A Parton, Holgate Sch, Barnsley; J A Pirrie, Inverness Royal Academy, Inverness; J D Smith, Easingwold Comprehensive Sch, Easingwold; G E Stringer, Gateacre Comprehensive, Liverpool; R S Walker, Lymm Secondary Modern, Cheshire; G J Wilson, St Davids High Sch, Chester.

ON THIS DAY

December 27, 1957

Forty years ago the Queen gave her first Christmas Day message on television. She was then 31 years of age in the fourth year of her reign.

THE QUEEN ON SETTING WORLD AN EXAMPLE

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first radio message to the Commonwealth by her grandfather, King George V, the Queen was televised while making her traditional Christmas Day broadcast to her peoples . . .

The Queen said in her broadcast:

Happy Christmas. Twenty five years ago my grandfather broadcast the first of these Christmas messages. To-day is another landmark because television has made it possible for many of you to see me in your homes on Christmas Day. My own family often gather round to watch television as they are at this moment, and that is how I imagine you now.

I very much hope that this new medium will make my Christmas message more personal and direct. It is inevitable that I should seem a rather remote figure to many of you — a successor to the kings and queens of history; someone whose face may be familiar in newspapers and films but who never really touches your personal lives. But now at least for a few minutes, I welcome you to the peace of my own home.

That it is possible for some of you to see me to-day is just another example of the speed at which things are changing all around us. Because of these changes I am not surprised that many people feel lost and unable to decide what to hold on to and what to discard, how to take advantage of the new life without losing the best of the old.

But it is not the new inventions which are the difficulty. The trouble is caused by unthinking people who carelessly throw away ageless ideals as if they were old and outworn machinery. They would have religion thrown aside, morality in personal and public life made meaningless, honesty counted as foolishness and self-interest set up in place of self-restraint.

At this critical moment in our history we will certainly lose the trust and respect of the world if we just abandon these fundamental principles which guided the men and women who built the greatness of this country and Commonwealth. To-day we need a special kind of courage, not the kind needed in battle, but a kind which makes us stand up for everything that we know is right, everything that is true and honest. We need the kind of courage that can withstand the subtle corruption of the cynics, so that we can show the world that we are not afraid of the future.

In the old days the monarch led his soldiers on the battlefield and his leadership at all times was close and personal. To-day things are very different. I cannot lead you into battle. I do not give you laws or administer justice. But I can do something else. I can give you my heart and my devotion to these old islands and to all the peoples of our brotherhood of nations.

I believe in our qualities and in our strength. I believe that together we can set an example to the world which will encourage upright people everywhere.

I would like to read you a few lines from Pilgrim's Progress because I am sure we can say with Mr Valiant for Truth, these words: 'Though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought his battles who now will be my rewarder."

The Queen recording her televised Christmas Day message from Sandringham last year

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

If I have indeed won your favour, then teach me to know your ways so that I can know you and continue in favour with you, for this nation is your own people.
Exodus 33 : 13

BIRTHS

EMMERSON - December 16th in Worcester, to Beverley (Nielsen) and Robert, a son, Charles Christian William, brother for Niels.

LENDRUM - On December 23rd at The Portland Hospital, to Wendy (née Hussey) and Harry, a son, Inigo Arthur Peter, a brother for Algy and Percy.

LLOYD - On December 23rd 1997, to Elmé and Simon, a beautiful daughter, Annabelle Louise.

MAY - On December 21st at The Portland Hospital, to Mick and Jill, a daughter, Honor, a sister for Lam, Ivo, Paddy and India-Rose.

PATTEN - On December 19th 1997, to Lucy and Matthew, a son, Arthur George, a brother for Henry.

STONE - On December 20th at The Portland Hospital, to Pamela and Bradford, a son, Daniel Bradford, a brother for Robert and Allison.

DEATHS

BURGOYNE-JOHNSON - John Michael ("Burgy") died 21st December. Funeral Chiltern Crematorium, Amersham, 29th December 10 am. No flowers. Donations to Age Concern c/o Heritage & Sons Ltd., 33-35 Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks. Enquiries (01628) 625069.

DEATHS

COURTNEY - Richard (Air Traffic Controller) of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Beloved husband of Janeis, father of Simon. Died Tuesday December 23rd. Funeral Service in Berwick Parish Church on Monday December 29th at 11.30 am.

HADDON - On December 20th in hospital aged 80 years Harold Bryan Haddon of Ilkley, dearly loved and caring husband of Sylvia. The Funeral Service will take place at All Saints Parish Church, Ilkley, on Wednesday December 31st at 2 pm followed by interment at Ilkley Cemetery. Family flowers. Donations if so wished, to The Variety Club of Great Britain for Disadvantaged Children c/o Mr Duncan Walker FRCS, Chairman of the Yorkshire Committee, 15 North Grange Mount, Headingley, Leeds or Macmillan Cancer Relief c/o Mrs Mary Heathcote, 5 Beamsley View, Ilkley, West Yorkshire.

LEWIS - Wm. Morris, of Waterloo, Pembroke Dock died peacefully aged 90 on 21st December 1997. Devoted husband to Elsie, father of Dorothy and Ken, brother of May and grandfather to Sian, Sarah, Megan, Anna, Steven, David and Owen. Funeral at St Teilo's Pembroke Dock on Monday 29th December at 11 am followed by interment at Hundleton Cemetery. Donations in lieu of flowers for St Teilo's Church Fund. May he rest in peace.

RANGER - Douglas Ranger K.B., F.R.C.S., on December 22nd aged 81 passed away peacefully in hospital after a short illness. Much loved husband of Betty, loving father of Philip and Michael and devoted grandfather of Frances, Benjamin, Amy, Alison, Paddy and Pearce. Private cremation. All friends welcome to Memorial Service at Christ Church, Malvern Road, Cheltenham on Tuesday December 30th at 11.30 am. No flowers please but donations to the Royal Surgical Aid Society, Age Care, 47 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PA. Service of Thanksgiving to be held later in London.

IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

BARBOUR - E.W. 27.12.94. Sadly missed, loved and remembered by your family always.

BIRTHDAYS

CHRISTINA J. [illegible] Happy 40th Birthday! love from Jim, Carmen & Pepe.

DAVID F HOOK Happy 21st Birthday. Love from us all.

[illegible] Many Happy Returns, all my love, all my life, with all my heart, Katie.

KEN Chalk. Happy 60th Birthday, with much love Olivia & Deborah.

SERVICES

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NEW YEARS EVE PARTY At Tokyo Joe's, all welcome, tickets available. Tel 0171 480 6183

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GIFTS

A BIRTHDATE Newspaper 1847-1997 in presentation folder £19.00 inc p&p. Newsreel year videos avail. Tel/Fax 01934-412844 9am 7 days.

LEGAL NOTICES

PROBATE CITATION
File No 1606/97
SURROGATE'S COURT - COUNTY CITATION
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
By the grace of God Free and Independent
TO: [illegible]

A petition having been duly filed by James H. Davis, who is domiciled at 1170 E. Main Street, Shrub Oak, NY 10588.
YOU ARE HEREBY CITED TO SHOW CAUSE before the Surrogate's Court, Westchester County, at 140 Grand St., White Plains, New York, on January 21 1998, at 9.30 o'clock in the forenoon of that day, why a decree should not be made in the estate of Barbara E. Holden lately domiciled at 3477 [illegible] Street, Shrub Oak, NY 10588 admitting to probate a Will dated May [illegible], 1997, a copy of which is attached, as the Will of Barbara E. Holden deceased, relating to real and personal property, and directing that Letters Testamentary issue to: James H. Davis, Esq.
Dated, Attested and Sealed, December 9, 1997.
HON Albert J Emanuelli, Surrogate.
John W Kelly, Chief Clerk.
James H. Davis Esq., 1170 E. Main Street, Shrub Oak, NY. Telephone number (914) 245-4662.
Attorney for Petitioner: Gary B. [illegible], Esq. of Counsel, 235 Main Street, White Plains, NY 10601.
Telephone number (914) 946 8800.

PUBLIC NOTICES

CHARITY COMMISSION
Charity: The Prince of Wales' Charitable Trust
Scheme
Reference [illegible]/97715/CD (Ldn)
The Commissioners propose to make a Scheme for this charity. A copy of the draft Scheme can be seen at Farrer & Co, 66 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LH, or can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to The Charity Commission, St Albans House, 57-60 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4QX quoting the above reference. Comments or representations can be made within one month from today.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REVELATION 12 [illegible] 24-5/9-07 [illegible] www.[illegible] PN

YOUNG beautiful Ms P. This has been the worst year of my life, I love and miss you so much. [illegible]

WE OWE A LOT TO OUR SOLDIERS

Who fight for us guarding our freedom and our children's future. Some fall on hard times. We need your help to help them. A donation now and a legacy later will help soldiers, ex soldiers and their families in need.

THE ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND

[illegible]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN ON DIALYSIS

need our love and practical support, not just today but everyday.
Sadly, money cannot buy healthy kidneys but it can make life worth having.
Donations urgently needed by
The British Kidney Patient Association,
Bordon, Hants, GU35 9JZ.
Regd Charity No [illegible]
B.K.P.A.

MEET SOMEONE THROUGH
THE TIMES
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THE TIMES
CHRISTMAS PERIOD
Birth, Marriage & Death Notices

The office is open today from 9.00 am to 11.30 am to book notices to appear in The Times on Monday December 27th.

Tel: 0171 680 6880

COURT & SOCIAL
FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGES

Over the New Year period the following deadlines will apply:

Notices for:-
Tuesday December 30th, should be received by noon on Monday December 29th; Wednesday December 31st, by 5pm on Monday December 29th; Thursday and Friday January 1st and 2nd 1998 by 5pm on Tuesday December 30th 1997; and Saturday and Monday January 3rd and 5th by 2pm on Wednesday December 31st.

Please send Court Page announcements by post/fax to:
Miss J. [illegible], Court & Social Advertising, The Times, PO Box 495, Virginia Street, London E1 9XS.
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Please include in all correspondence: signature of either one of the parties concerned or a parent, a daytime and home telephone number and address.
Advertising Rate is £15.28 per line inc VAT.

هكذا من الأصل

OBITUARIES

MILESTONES OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

Randy California, rock star, died on January 2 aged 45. Having impressed Jimi Hendrix with his guitar-playing at 15, and playing with his band for three months, he formed the group Spirit. *I Got a Line on You* was a hit in 1969, and there were several "concept" albums, notably *Kaptain Kopter and the Fabulous Twirlybirds*.

Sandor Vegh, violinist, died on January 8 aged 91. After playing in the Hungarian and Vegh Quartets, he collaborated famously with Casals, Menuhin and Richter. Character, excitement and insight meant much more to him than technical perfection, which he dismissed as "the McDonald's school of music-making".

Myfanwy Piper, art critic and librettist, died on January 18 aged 85. She wrote three operas with Benjamin Britten. She was married to the artist John Piper for more than 50 years, as well as being an early muse and longstanding friend of John Betjeman.

"Colonel" Tom Parker, Elvis Presley's agent, died on January 21 aged 87. Born in The Netherlands, Parker stowed away to America when he was 16 and worked in circuses and advertising. As a promoter in the Deep South, he once ran a troupe of dancing chickens, but then, in 1955, he met Elvis. He arranged a new recording contract, and exercised total control. His exorbitant share of the takings from records and merchandising was revealed only on Presley's death in 1977 when the family sued him for fraud and mismanagement.

Colin Welch, journalist, died on January 27 aged 72. He established the *Daily Telegraph* column "The Way of the World" in 1957, and as that paper's deputy editor he was the organising mind behind its brand of free market Conservatism from 1964 to 1980.

FEBRUARY

Pamela Harriman, the English rose who became American Ambassador to France, died on February 5 aged 76. She was famous for her love affairs and marriages. After her divorce from Randolph Churchill she had a succession of liaisons, notably with Averell Harriman, Ed Murrow, Prince Aly Khan and Gianni Agnelli before marrying the Broadway musical producer Leland Hayward in 1960. Six months after his death in 1971 she married Harriman as his third wife. He died in 1986, leaving her at least $66 million, though his daughters were left only $4,000 each. She was the mother of the present Winston Churchill.

Brian Connolly, singer with the 1970s glam-rock group Sweet, died on February 10 aged 47. With hits such as *Little Willy* and *Teenage Rampage*, Sweet achieved all the trappings of pop stardom. At one time Connolly had six Rolls-Royces. Heavy drinking, however, led to heart attacks, partial paralysis, the end of his marriage, and sad attempts to relive his glory days by peddling nostalgic ironies in clubs and holiday camps.

Deng Xiaoping, China's "paramount leader", died on February 19 aged 92. After surviving the disapproval of Chairman Mao during the 1950s and 1960s, Deng fought his way to the top of the Communist Party by 1978. He set China on a new course of economic reform — abolishing Mao's people's communes — and began to open it up to the world. His methods, however, remained authoritarian, as was seen by the world when pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square were attacked by soldiers with considerable loss of life.

MARCH

Michael Manley, three times Prime Minister of Jamaica, died on March 8 aged 72. He was originally a hardline socialist, who tried to align Jamaica with Castro's Cuba and solve the problems of the slums by spending. But by his last term of office, 1989-92, he saw that poverty would better be overcome by investment from the United States, and even by Thatcherite privatisations.

Dame Veronica Wedgwood, OM, historian of the 17th century, died on March 9 aged 86. Her early books on *The Thirty Years War* and *William the Silent* were published to clamorous applause. She was especially known for her work on the Great Rebellion, and *The Trial of Charles I* was a bestseller. She also wrote biographies of Cromwell, Richlieu, Milton and Rubens.

Fred Zinnemann, film director, died on March 14 aged 89. The man behind *High Noon*, *From Here to Eternity*, *Oklahoma!* and *Day of the Jackal*, won two awards for best director, two best picture Oscars and three Golden Globes.

Willem de Kooning, painter, died on March 19 aged 92. He made his name in the 1940s and 1950s, along with Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. Their school of Abstract Expressionism made them fashionable and famous, but de Kooning never learnt to relax. Frenzied painting and palimpsesting alternated with depression, drink and eventually Alzheimer's disease, which cast doubt on the status of his last works. His *Pink Lady* (1944) set a record price for a living artist in 1987, fetching $3.6 million at auction.

The Rev W. Awdry, creator of Thomas the Tank Engine, died on March 21 aged 85. Like his father, he was a lifelong enthusiast for railways, both full-scale and model. He first told his stories when his son Christopher was recovering from measles, and the first book *The Three Railway Engines* was published the day after VE-Day. From 1948 until 1972 he produced a book a year. The stories have been read as satire and accused of racial and sexual stereotyping. They are about railway engines.

Sir Victor Pritchett, author, died on March 20 aged 96. Although he was an all-round man of letters, writing book reviews for the *New Statesman* for nearly 50 years, V. S. Pritchett was best known for his short stories. He wrote about the burdens borne by lower-middle-class people in keeping up appearances. His sympathies were wide, as was shown by his two volumes of autobiography, *A Cab at the Door* and *Midnight Oil*.

APRIL

Allen Ginsberg, poet, died on April 5 aged 70. "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by / madness, starving hysterical naked" began *Howl*, with which Ginsberg claimed his place in the Beat generation in 1956. A brilliant, wayward student, he spent time in an asylum where he took drugs and claimed that God had spoken to him while he was reading Blake. His poems and performances ran on and on, and he became a travelling phenomenon. He was commended by William Carlos Williams, toured with Bob Dylan (who trusted his judgment) and played *Yellow Submarine* to Ezra Pound (who tapped his stick).

Helene Hanff, writer, died on April 9 aged 80. Her fame rested on a single book, *84 Charing Cross Road*, a correspondence between herself in her days as a writer of television scripts in New York and the London secondhand bookshop Marks & Co. Received with nostalgic rapture, it eventually became a film, starring Anthony Hopkins.

Denis Compton, cricketer, died on April 23, aged 78. He scored his first century at Lord's at 14, and was playing for England at 19. Touring Australia in 1946-47 he scored four successive centuries, and in the English summer of 1947 he scored 3,816 (average: 90.85. In 1950 he was part of the Arsenal squad that won the FA Cup. His 38,635 first-class runs included 122 centuries, and he took 613 wickets. He also advertised Brylcreem.

Lord Taylor of Gosforth, lawyer, died on April 28 aged 66. From the time he was appointed Lord Chief Justice in 1992, Lord Taylor saw his role as one of defending the independence of the judiciary against the encroachments of both the executive and the legislature. His battles with the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, were fought amid great publicity. In particular, he resisted the introduction of compulsory life sentences for those convicted of some sexual and violent offences for a second time.

MAY

Sir John Junor, former Editor of the *Sunday Express*, died on May 3 aged 78. He had ruled the paper for 32 years, during which time its circulation plunged from 4½ million to less than 2¼ million. His own column, latterly in the *Mail on Sunday*, last appeared the week before his death. Gruff, philistine and reactionary, it was often attacked by exactly the kinds of *bien pensants* he most loathed.

Hughie Green, TV presenter of *Opportunity Knocks*, died on May 3 aged 77. He genuinely enjoyed discovering talent, and his show helped to launch Les Dawson, Mary Hopkin, Little and Large and Pam Ayres. But his gushing geniality, also evident on *Double Your Money*, began to grate and *Opportunity Knocks* was dropped in 1978. At his funeral it was announced that opportunity had once knocked for him and that he had an illegitimate child, who recently turned out to be Paula Yates.

Laurie Lee, author, died on May 13 aged 83. He was famous not as a poet, as he had always hoped, but for *Cider With Rosie* (1959), a somewhat winsome tale of youthful seduction in Gloucestershire's Slad Valley. The secret of the identity of Rosie went with him to the grave.

JUNE

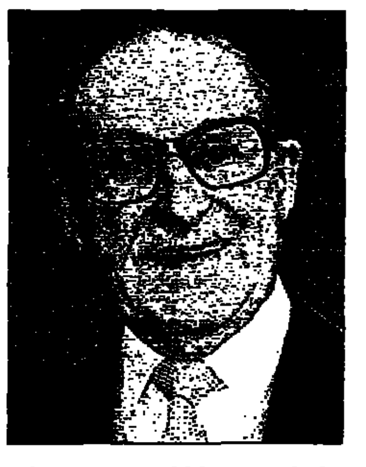
Doc Cheatham, jazz trumpeter, died on June 2 aged 91, after a career spanning almost the entire history of recorded jazz.

Ronnie Lane, pop musician, died on June 5 aged 51. Lane first enjoyed success with the Small Faces, stalwarts of the 1960s Mod scene who went on to develop their own quirky brand of pyschedelia. Transformed into the Faces, dominated by the strutting ego of the singer Rod Stewart, they enjoyed a string of hits in the early 1970s. Lane struck out on his own in 1973. He did some well-regarded solo work and pursued his dream of a rock circus with jugglers and fire-eaters but in 1977 he began to suffer from multiple sclerosis.

Helen Jacobs, American tennis player, died on June 2 aged 88. Her Wimbledon title of 1936 followed four successive American national titles. Her career was a prolonged struggle against the machine-like Helen Wills. Their most dramatic match was at Forest Hills in 1933. Wills had not lost a match since 1926, nor even a set since 1927. Jacobs won the first set 8-6, lost the second 6-3 and was 3-0 up in the third when Wills withdrew complaining of injury, though announcing her intention to play in the doubles final. In all Jacobs won nine Grand Slam titles.

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, underwater explorer and film-maker, died on June 25 aged 87. He single-handedly popularised marine science, pioneering scuba equipment, small manoeuvrable submarines and underwater cinematography. Audiences were rapt in 1955 to discover *The Silent World*, with remarkable sequences of dolphins filmed from a hollow dome beneath the bow of his converted minesweeper *Calypso*. The subsequent book sold 5 million copies.

Charlie Chester, comedian, died on June 26 aged 83. One of the last relics of the music hall, he had been a star of radio, the variety theatre and television. He presented British television's first give-away gameshow, *Take Pot Luck* (first prize: a set on which to watch the show), and in 1969 he began his long running radio programme *Sunday Soapbox*, which helped people to trace long-lost friends.



JULY

Robert Mitchum, film actor, died on July 1 aged 79. He once said that he had two acting styles: with a horse and without. He made about 100 films, from *The Story of GI Joe*, which won him an Oscar nomination, to *Ryan's Daughter* and both versions of *Cape Fear*. His typically tough, hard-drinking persona became a screen legend.

James Stewart, the archetype hero in three decades of westerns, died on July 2 aged 89. In his early days he played opposite Marlene Dietrich, Eleanor Powell and Margaret Sullavan. His first classic western was *Destry Rides Again* in 1939. In 1984 he was rewarded by a special Academy Award for "50 years of meaningful performances".

Gianni Versace, fashion designer, was shot dead, aged 50, at Miami Beach on July 15. His first signed collection of women's clothes appeared in 1978, and he went on, as a rival to Armani, to open showrooms in Paris, London and Berlin as well as Milan. The vast appearance fees he paid sent the cost of supermodels soaring. The dress of his in which Liz Hurley appeared in 1994 did the same for pulse-rates.

Ben Hogan, perhaps the greatest golfer of all time, died on July 25 aged 84. Relentless practice and determination made him four times winner of the US Open. Three of those victories came after the car crash in 1949 which doctors had said would finish his career. In 1953 he won the British Open by four strokes, the US Masters by five and the US Open by six — lowering the championship record total for the Oakmont course by 16 strokes. If there is such a thing as golfing genius, this was it.

Viscount Tonypandy, George Thomas, former Speaker of the House of Commons, died on September 22 aged 88. As the first Speaker in the era of parliamentary sound broadcasting, he won national renown with his calls of "Order, order". He was first elected as the leftwing Labour MP for Cardiff South in 1950, but his later public image was that of a mellow, impartial and kindly man. After his death, this was challenged by accusations of snobbery, condescension and even cruelty.

Sir James Goldsmith, tycoon, died on July 19 aged 64. When he was 15 he won £8,000 on an accumulator bet, walked out of Eton and set off on the trail of acquisition and abandon that was to make him a billionaire and a classically successful womaniser. In 1987 he sold his assets just before the global stockmarket crash, and thereafter he dedicated himself to conservation and, latterly, to opposing European integration. He founded and funded the Referendum Party but won little support, losing his own deposit at Putney in May.

AUGUST

Svyatoslav Richter, concert pianist, died on August 1 aged 82. One of the great interpreters of the century, he was also famous for his "no-shows": if he did not feel up to playing his best, audiences had to settle for nothing at all.

William Burroughs, author, died on August 2 aged 83. After post-graduate work at Harvard he rejected bourgeois life and entered the demi-monde that was to shape his life, working as a bartender, rat-catcher and private detective (not necessarily all at once). In the early 1950s he became addicted to drugs, travelling the world in search of better fixes. After cold turkey in London, he wrote *The Naked Lunch* (1959), an aleatory, anarchic fantasy about addiction and homosexuality. Its violence, scatology and sadism brought a temporary ban in America. He never looked back.

Carel Weight, painter, died on August 13 aged 88. He was a very English eccentric — like Stanley Spencer or L.S. Lowry — who found the fantastic within the apparently banal. He showed mystery, even tragedy, beneath life's grimy surfaces. His work had nothing in common with the abstract schools that dominated most of his lifetime, but had been increasingly appreciated during the past 15 years.

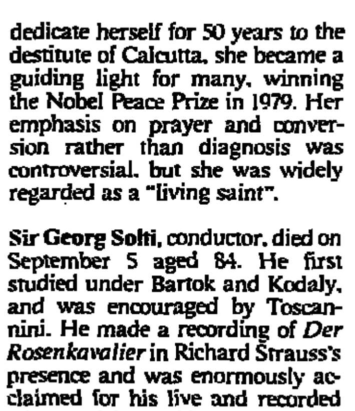
Diana, Princess of Wales, died in Paris on August 31 aged 36. Her death eclipsed the business of nations. The child of a broken home, she made of her own pain a gift for others. It gave her a remarkable affinity with those who were suffering or lonely. From being a charming, slightly gawky girl when she entered public life with her marriage to the Prince of Wales in July 1981, she grew into a woman of dazzling beauty. But she will be remembered for brightening the lives of the sick, the destitute, victims of landmines, and especially children. The unhappy side of her life and of her manipulative approach to all publicity seem likely to be forgotten.

SEPTEMBER

Jeffrey Bernard, Soho's most famous drunk, died on September 4 aged 65. His journalism appeared most notably in *The Spectator*, but he gradually became not the reporter but the spectacle. His column about his exploits and ailments was described as "a suicide note in instalments", and in 1989 Keith Waterhouse had a West End hit with the dramatic entertainment *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell*.

H. J. Eysenck, writer on psychology, died on September 4 aged 81. His challenging and diverse work expanded the scope of psychological exploration, as well as popularising it. His ideas about intelligence quotient and the importance of genetics in the determining of character were attacked as politically insensitive, and he was accordingly marginalised within his profession.

Mother Teresa died on September 5 aged 87. After receiving the "call within a call" that led her to dedicate herself for 50 years to the destitute of Calcutta, she became a guiding light for many, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Her emphasis on prayer and conversion rather than diagnosis was controversial, but she was widely regarded as a "living saint".



Sir Georg Solti, conductor, died on September 5 aged 84. He first studied under Bartok and Kodaly, and was encouraged by Toscannini. He made a recording of *Der Rosenkavalier* in Richard Strauss's presence and was enormously acclaimed for his live and recorded *Ring*, and for making the Chicago Symphony Orchestra the finest in America.

President Mobutu of Zaire died on September 7 aged 66. He had brutally misruled the former Congo for 32 years, presiding over a complete collapse of the economy while amassing a huge personal fortune.

General Sir John Hackett, former Commander-in-Chief of the British Army on the Rhine, died on September 9 aged 86. He won the MC, DSO and Bar during the Second World War, and after leaving the Army became Principal of King's College, London. He wrote the bestseller *The Third World War*.

OCTOBER

J. G. Links, expert on Canaletto and author of *Venice for Pleasure*, died on October 1 aged 92. His seductive guidebook wears its learning lightly, preferring a good café to yet another Titian, but Links's scholarship was of the first rank. After recognising a neglected Canaletto, he re-edited the *catalogue raisonné*, untangling numerous problems with the rigour of a detective.

A. L. Rowse, historian, died on October 3 aged 93. A proud and touchy man who published too many books, he was at his best on the Elizabethan period and when writing about his native Cornwall.

John Denver, singer-songwriter, died on October 12 aged 53 while piloting his own plane. His extremely popular country and western songs included *Leaving on a Jet Plane*, *Country Roads* and *Rocky Mountain High*.

Harold Robbins, pulp novelist, died on October 14 aged 81. He achieved a winning formula with his fictionalised life of Howard Hughes, *The Carpetbaggers* (1961), and his adept, downmarket variations on sex, power and money kept him at the top of the bestseller lists thereafter. He lived the fantasy life of one of his characters.

NOVEMBER

Joyce Wethered (Lady Heathcoat Amory), golfer, died on November 18 aged 96. Becoming English Ladies' Champion in 1920 when not quite 19, she held the title for five consecutive years and was four times winner of the British Ladies' Open.

Michael Hutchence, lead singer with INXS, was found dead in his hotel room in Sydney on November 22, aged 37. He was the closest Australia has come to producing a bad boy of rock. His band, originally the Farriss Brothers, formed in Sydney in 1977, toured widely, and became famous through videos made for MTV. Although INXS's music later became less fashionable, Hutchence remained a favourite of the gossip columns because of his affairs with actresses and models, and then his alliance with Paula Yates, with whom he had a daughter.

Hastings Banda, first President of Malawi, died on November 25. He was thought to be 99. After practicing as a GP in Willesden, he returned to his native land in 1958 and soon consolidated his power. He suppressed all opposition, sometimes brutally, but helped the country to make the most of its minimal resources. His links with South Africa were criticised, but in Malawi he was rightly regarded as father of the nation.

DECEMBER

Stephane Grappelli, jazz violinist, died on December 1, aged 89. Born in Paris, he was one of the first non-American musicians to make an impact in jazz. He played with Django Reinhardt from 1934 until the gypsy guitarist's death in 1953, and from 1971 he made many successful duet recordings with Yehudi Menuhin. He continued to perform almost to the end of his life, even when confined to a wheelchair.

Billy Bremner, soccer player, died on December 7 aged 54. He had won 54 caps for Scotland and almost every club honour in the game. His proudest moment perhaps came with Scotland's win over England, the world champions, in 1967. He was the fulcrum of Don Revie's Leeds United side for 17 years, from 1959 to 1976. He later became manager of Doncaster and Leeds, but insufficient investment meant that success alluded him.

Woodrow Wyatt, politician, journalist and chairman of the Tote, died on December 7 aged 79. He first entered Parliament in 1945, on the left of the victorious Labour Party, but he was always a dandyish figure. He lost his seat in 1955 and was taken on by *Panorama*. He was an abrasive interviewer, and played his part in exposing the scandal in the ETU over ballot-rigging. He was ostracised by Labour, and became instead an ardent supporter of Margaret Thatcher, writing in *The Times* and as "The Voice of Reason" in the *News of the World*. Mrs Thatcher made him first a knight and then a peer. Always his own man, he ended up as virtually the only public advocate of John Major.

THE TIMES TODAY

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27 1997

NEWS

Cook may run as Scotland PM

■ Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, is considering running for the post of Scotland's First Minister — effectively Prime Minister north of the border — after the Scottish parliament is elected in 1999. His decision will have key implications for Tony Blair's first serious Cabinet reshuffle, to be carried out next spring or in early summer. Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary has long been regarded as the hot favourite .... Page 1

Defiant hunters saddle up

■ Huntsmen and their supporters turned out in near record numbers yesterday to defend their traditional Boxing Day meets and defy protesters who predicted this would be the last year that it would be legal to ride to hounds .... Pages 1, 3

TV ratings

The BBC claimed victory after *Men Behaving Badly* emerged as the most popular Christmas Day programme, attracting 15.5 million .... Page 1

Ban hooligans call

Police demanded that soccer hooligans be barred from travelling abroad as supporters .... Page 2

Road rage case

The family of a suspected "road rage" victim described how she was left for dead with severe head injuries .... Page 3

Storm fatalities

A father, his daughter and her boyfriend were crushed to death when a tree fell on their car, taking the death toll in the Christmas storms to 13 .... Page 5

Church twinning

Winchester could be twinned with Florence in a partnership between a Church of England diocese and Roman Catholics .... Page 8

New-look probation

The Probation Service is to be renamed to persuade the public that the service is involved in punishment .... Page 10

Kenya clashes

Teargas was fired by police at a Kenya election rally after supporters of rival parties clashed. The trouble broke out as President Moi was leaving a rally .... Page 12

Yeltsin attack

President Yeltsin attacked liberal reformers, comparing them to Communists .... Page 13

Drug gang's haven

Basseterre, a quiet St Kitts-Nevis port, has become a haven for a ring of allegedly ruthless drug traffickers .... Page 15

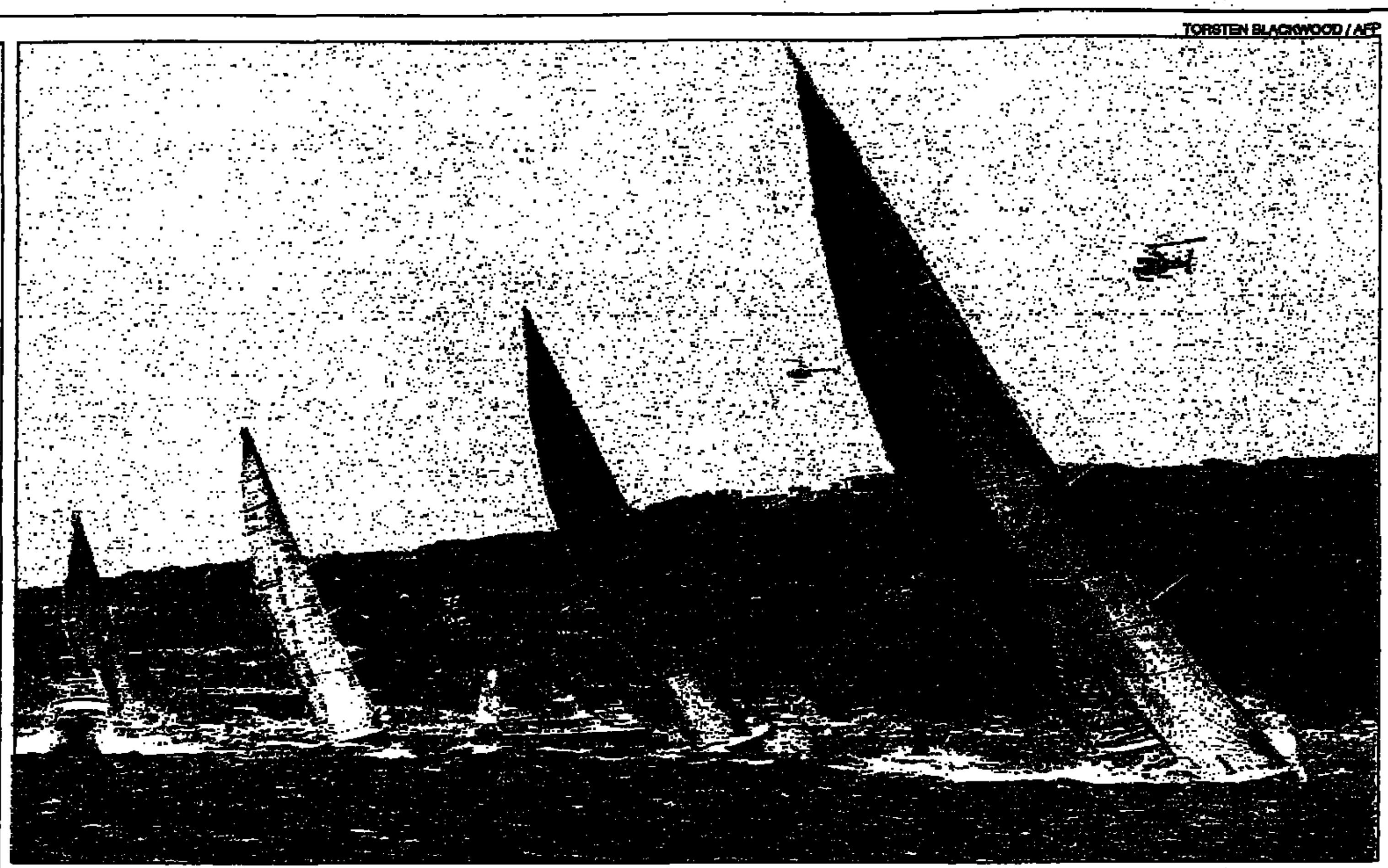
Nurses' plea

As they begin their second year in a stifling Saudi jail, Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan are pleading with their captors to end the uncertainty .... Page 17

This paragraph is in black and white

■ The customer is possibly very stupid says *New Scientist* after listing obvious information and warnings printed on consumer products. Sainsbury's peanut package says: "Contains nuts." In America drivers have stickers on their wing mirrors warning: "Remember - objects seen in mirror are behind you" ...... Page 1

TORSTEN BLACKWOOD / AFP



Brindabella of Australia leads entries from Sweden and Hong Kong out of Sydney Harbour in the Sydney-Hobart yacht race. Page 30

NEWS FEATURES

Valerie Grove with David Benson whose show about Kenneth Williams proves to be more than an exercise in impersonation .... Page 19

Des Burkinshaw meets Texas, 1997's pop pin-up, and wonders who is next Page 18

Glory: Venaria, the Versailles of Italy, is to be restored after years of ruin and neglect, coinciding with the return of the Savoys .... Page 9

Sailing: Why tugs, pilot vessels and a weathership have been converted into the nautical version of customised Range Rovers .... Page 7

OPINION

London calling: The spirit of 1948 should still be the torch for the Olympic movement. There are signs that Sydney will attempt to shift back towards the values of London 50 years ago .... Page 21

Foxing day: The foxhunting issue is a clash of cultures disguised as a difference of opinion. It will remain so until the full facts enter the field .... Page 21

LETTERS

BSE; radar's "high point"; faith; charitable partnership; college fees .... Page 15

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: Abusing the honours list is like taking cannabis. It seems mildly pleasant and the crime is victimless. All that matters is not getting caught .... Page 20

Michael Gove: It's just a pity that *It's a Wonderful Life* is a truly terrible film. As art it is cheap, and as propaganda just plain pernicious Page 20

Simon Barnes: We wanted to vote for goodness. Perhaps the votes were in fact intended for Swampy .... Page 20

OBITUARIES

The milestones for the year

BUSINESS

Slowing down: House prices may have peaked and may rise by just 5 per cent in 1998 .... Page 39

Bouncing back: South Korean markets staged a remarkable comeback, as traders reacted enthusiastically to the IMF agreement .... Page 39

Pay cut: Millions of people face a cut in take-home pay because of changes to profit-related pay .... Page 39

WEEKEND MONEY

Financial sites on the Internet; Tessas; the markets loop-the-loop .... Pages 43-48

SPORT

Football: Manchester United extended their Premiership lead as Blackburn and Chelsea dropped points .... Pages 25-27

Rugby union: Saracens lost their first Premiership game when Joel Stransky won it for Leicester with a last-minute dropped goal .... Page 31

Racing: See More Business, at 10-1, ran away with the King George VI Chase .... Page 32

Cricket: England failed to retain the women's World Cup .... Page 34

SECTIONS

MAGAZINE

Images of '97: The pictures that tell the story of the year .... Page 8-23

Jeremy Irons: An actor's view of the year ... Page 25

Jonathan Meades: The best and worst of eating out .... Page 28

Food and drink: Frances Bissell and Jane MacQuitty .... Page 37

metro

Big Interview: The actor Linus Roache is flying high .... Pages 6-8

Dance: Deborah Bull speaks her mind .. Page 10

New Year's Eve: Guide to the celebrations ... Page 24

Books: Views, reviews and choice ...... Pages 16-23

Films: .... Page 9

Listings: ...... Pages 26-43

WEEKEND

Scotland the rave: The changing face of New Year .... Pages 1, 3

Looking ahead: Planning for the big millennium party .... Page 2

Shopping: ...... Pages 4, 5

Gardening: Questions and some answers .. Pages 6, 7

Property: ...... Pages 10, 11

Faith: Services...... Page 12

Vision

Seven-day guide to 40 channels and radio

mega

Get fit with Gary Lineker

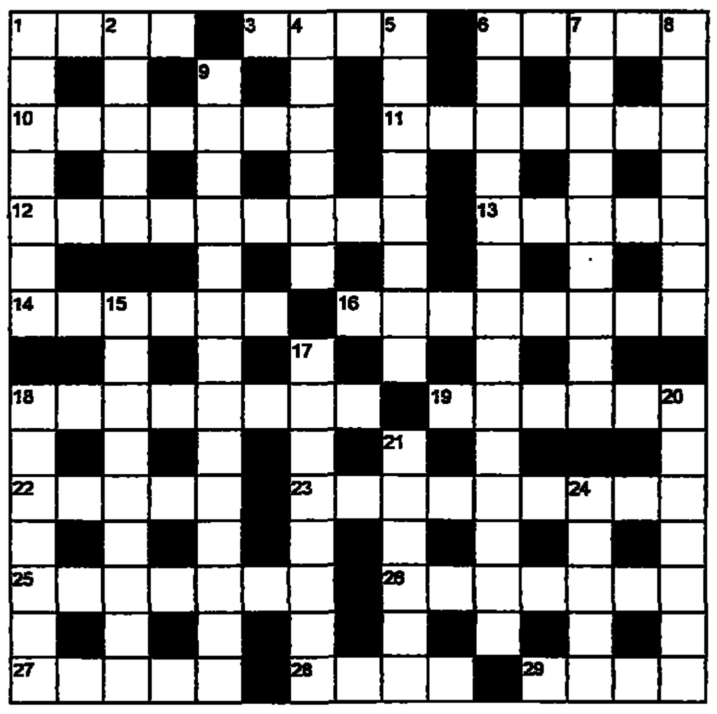
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,673

A £30 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address ....

....

....



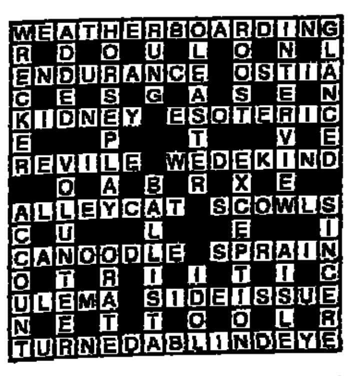
ACROSS

1 Forbid surgeon to start on operation (4).
3 Turn quickly and return shots (4).
6 Soft chap falls in river (5).
10 Can East European dance round this? (7).
11 Garment that's concealing onset of greyness — just a trace (7).
12 Like the men Alice met, lacking distinction (9).
13 Parking vehicle at the front, go for a walk (5).
14 Avoid giving two points to champ (6).
16 Roughness beautiful creature encountered in beastly accommodation (8).
18 Dried meat cooked in mine camp (8).
19 Rub elbows with Robin and Jack (6).
22 States time for practice (5).
23 Brass, a lot — that can come to be a burden (9).
25 Hit and run — bluebottle appears (7).
26 See below split (7).
27 In secret, I endeavour to form a new connection (5).
28 Effect of heavenly bodies that's present in men's affairs, according to Brutus (4).
29 Boast about rank (4).

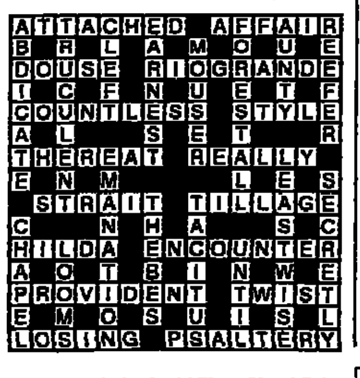
DOWN

1 Very angry feeling about a politician who preys on other people? (7).
2 Herb gets prison sentence, we hear (5).
4 Drill with bit right inside (6).
5 Isn't love in order for one who creates romance? (8).
6 Celebrate launch (4,3,4,3).
7 Excitement as I am entered in a race (9).
8 Give too much ham? Take a pound off (7).
9 Despite desperate efforts, supporting my biography (3,3,4,2,2).
15 Happen to change direction, of course (4,5).
17 One's left country in launch — it makes a change (8).
18 Craftsman using soft wood (7).
20 Spread out wide with elite troops (7).
21 On a governing body (6).
24 Ask waiter to supply what might be described as apple pie (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,668



Solution to Puzzle No 20,672



LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: *S Hanton, Princes Risborough, Bucks; M Ebert, Heathfield, E Sussex; S M Mann, Edinburgh; T J Meaney, Solihull, W Midlands; G Thomas, Keynsham, Bristol.*

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises: 8 06 am — Sun sets: 3 58 pm
Moon sets 2.42 pm — Moon rises 5.20 am

New moon December 29

London 3 58 pm to 8 06 am
Bristol 4 07 pm to 8.16 am
Edinburgh 3 44 pm to 8 44 am
Manchester 3 56 pm to 8 25 am
Penzance 4.26 pm to 8.21 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 8 06 am — Sun sets: 3 58 pm
Moon sets 3.28 pm — Moon rises 6.23 am

New moon tomorrow

London 3.58 pm to 8 06 am
Bristol 4 08 pm to 8 16 am
Edinburgh 3 45 pm to 8 44 am
Manchester 3.56 pm to 8 25 am
Penzance 4 27 pm to 8.21 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	11 08	6 2	23 41	6 5
Aberdeen	11 04	3.7	23 11	3.8
Avonmouth	04 19	10 9	16 41	11 4
Belfast	08.26	3 0	20 27	3.3
Cardiff	04 05	10 1	16 27	10 5
Devonport	02.54	4 7	15 08	4 9
Dover	08 24	5 8	20 57	5.8
Dublin (N Wall)	09.13	3.6	21 25	3 8
Falmouth	02.25	4 5	14.39	4 7
Greenock	10 15	3 1	22 08	3.2
Harwich	08 59	3 3	21 34	3 6
Holyhead	07 59	4 8	20.09	5.0
Hull (Albert D)	03 30	7 3	16 09	7 4
Ilfracombe	03 13	7 5	15 34	7 9
King's Lynn	03.32	5 5	16 16	5 7

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
Leith	00 39	4 7	12.12	4 8
Liverpool	08.39	8.0	20 57	8 3
Lowestoft	06 36	2.3	19.42	2 3
Margate	09 14	4.2	21 57	4.3
Milford Haven	03 29	5 6	15 49	6 0
Newquay	02.25	5 7	14 45	6 0
Oban	03.21	3 3	15 39	3 5
Penzance	01 56	4 6	14 15	4.9
Portland	04 18	1 5	16 18	1 6
Portsmouth	08.54	4.2	21.09	4 0
Shoreham	08 29	5.3	21 00	5.2
Southampton	08.16	4.2	20.30	4 1
Swansea	03 25	7.8	15 51	8 1
Tees	00 38	4 6	13 17	4.8
Walton-on-N	02 56	3 5	21 31	3 7

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Falmouth, Cornwall, 13C (55F); lowest day max: Spadeadam, Cumbria, 5C (41F); highest rainfall: Crosby, Liverpool, 1 10in highest sunshine: Falmouth, 5 9hr

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 43.6% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the second half of 1996

FORECAST

☐ **General:** England and Wales will be bright and breezy with sunny spells and showers. The showers will be mainly in western parts where some will be heavy. Eastern and southeastern England should have reasonable sunny spells. Northern Ireland and western Scotland will be cold and blustery with a fair number of showers, some heavy and wintry over high ground. Eastern Scotland will have fewer showers and longer spells of sunshine.

☐ **London, E Anglia, E Midlands, E England, NE England:** rather cool and breezy, but most parts will be dry with sunny spells. A moderate westerly wind. Max 9C (48F).

☐ **SE England, Central S England, Channel Isles:** sunny spells, but there will also be some showers. It will feel cool in the moderate to fresh westerly wind. Max 9C (48F).

☐ **W Midlands, SW England, Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, Central N:** sunny spells, but some heavy showers are also likely. A fresh west to northwesterly wind. Max 9C (48F).

☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland: Orkney, Shetland:** some sunshine but the occasional shower will come along, too. A light and variable wind. Max 7C (45F).

☐ **SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Argyll, NW Scotland:** some bright spells, but cold with some heavy showers, including snow over the highest ground. A moderate to fresh westerly wind. Max 7C (45F).

☐ **Northern Ireland:** cold and showery with the heaviest showers in the west. The east will see brighter weather. A moderate to fresh westerly wind. Max 7C (45F).

☐ **Republic of Ireland:** showery in the west and north; fine and dry with patchy sunshine elsewhere. Wind westerly, fresh. Chilly wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **Outlook:** central and eastern areas will be mostly dry tomorrow after some early patchy frost and fog. The west will turn more cloudy with rain later. Monday will remain cool and unsettled with rain for most places.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

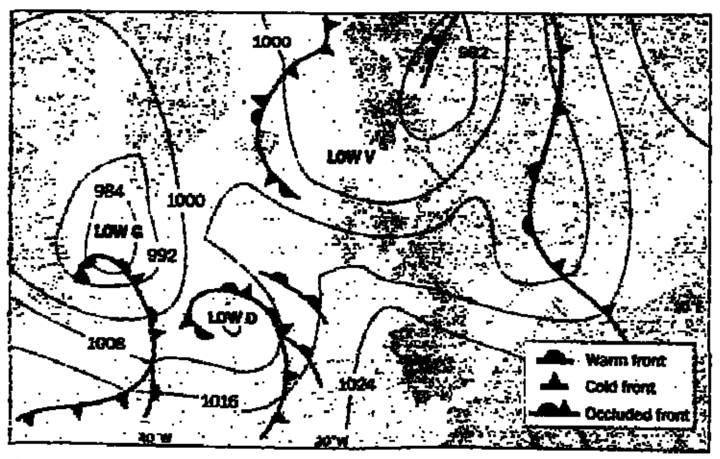
24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F			Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	0.6	0.07	7	45	b	Lerwick	-	0.11	6	43	sh
Anglesey	0 1	0 20	9	48	c	Leuchars	1.0	0.01	7	45	b
Aspatria	0 1	0 08	7	45	c	Littlehmptn	4.6	0.12	10	50	s
Aviemore	-	0 15	5	41	sh	London	2.1	0 02	9	48	sh
Belfast	1.3	0 32	8	46	b	Lowestoft	-	0.01	8	46	d
Birmingham	1.1	0 01	7	45	sh	Manchester	1 3	0.43	8	46	sh
Bognor R	3 6	0 16	9	48	s	Margate	-	0.01	10	50	c
Bournem'th	2.5	0.04	10	50	b	Minehead	2.4	0.57	10	50	b
Bristol	2.0	0.82	10	50	s	Morecambe	0.5	0.61	8	46	du
Buxton	0 3	0 80	6	43	sh	Newcastle	1.1	0.08	7	45	b
Cardiff	5.0	0 73	10	50	s	Newquay	X				
Clacton	1.5	-	9	48	c	Norwich	-	0 01	8	46	sh
Cleethorpes	X					Oxford	1.5	0.33	9	48	sh
Colwyn Bay	-	0 92	9	48	c	Penzance	X	0 58	12	54	sh
Cromer	X					Poole	2.2	0 71	11	52	b
Dunbar	X					Prestatyn	X	0.82	8	46	sh
Eastbourne	1 9	0 09	9	48	c	Ross-on-wye	1.2	0 02	9	48	b
Edinburgh	0 3	0.20	6	43	c	Salcombe	X				
Eskdalemuir	2.5	0.31	7	45	b	Saunton Snd	4.5	0.22	11	52	s
Exmouth	4 4	0 14	10	50	s	Scarboro'	-	0.23	7	45	c
Falmouth	5.9	0.86	13	55	s	Shrewsbury	0 1	0.19	8	46	sh
Fishguard	0 4	-	9	48	c	Skegness	X				
Folkestone	2 0	0 01	10	50	b	Southend	X				
Glasgow	-	0.05	7	45	sh	Southport	X				
Guernsey	X					Southsea	X				
Hastings	2.5	0.02	10	50	sh	Stornoway	X				
Hayling I	3.0	0 07	10	50	b	Swanage	2.5	0.09	10	50	b
Herne Bay	2.3	0 01	10	50	b	Teignmouth	4.9	0.15	11	52	sh
Hove	2.2	0 04	10	50	s	Tenby	4.3	0.26	11	52	s
Hunstanton	X	0 06	7	45	c	Tiree	1 8	0.11	10	50	sh
Isle of Man	0.2	0.24	9	48	b	Torquay	2 7	0 06	11	52	b
Isle of Wight	X					Tynemouth	-	0.08	7	45	s
Jersey	4 5	0.46	11	52	sh	West-s-mare	1.0	0 98	10	50	b
Kinloss	-	0.01	6	43	b	Weymouth	2.0	0 04	11	52	b
Leeds	0.8	0 33	8	46	b						

ABROAD

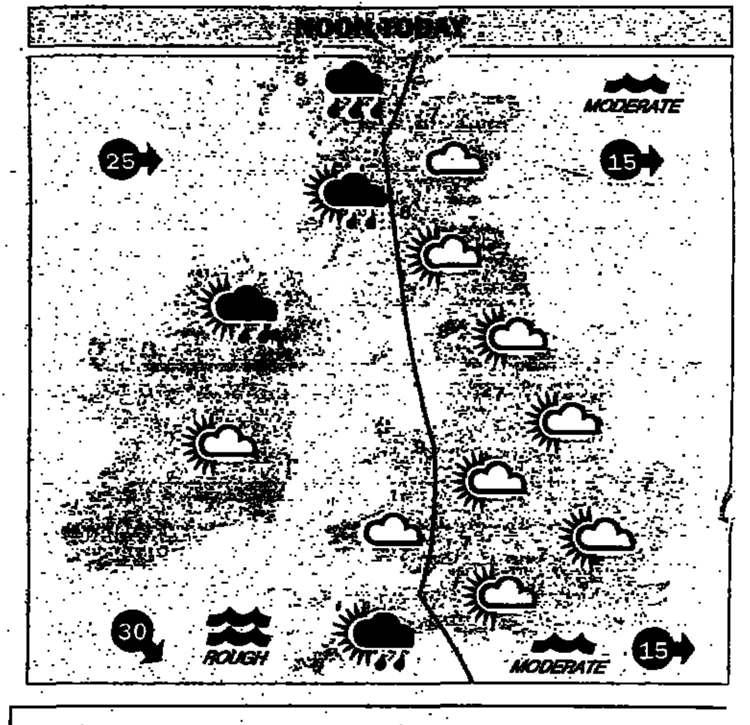
Ajaccio	16	61	f	Corfu	15	59	s	Majorca	16	61	s	Rome	11	52	c
Akrotiri	18	64	s	C'phagn	7	45	c	Malaga	17	63	s	S Fr'sco	10	50	s
Alex'dria	20	68	c	Dublin	10	50	f	Malta	17	63	s	S Paulo	X		
Algiers	17	63	s	Dubrovnik	12	54	f	Melb'rne	24	75	s	Salzburg	11	52	s
Amst'dm	9	48	c	Faro	15	59	f	Mexico C	20	68	s	Santiago	25	77	f
Athens	15	59	f	Florence	7	45	f	Miami	28	82	s	Seoul	10	50	s
B Aires	30	86	s	Frankfurt	12	54	c	Milan	7	45	c	Sing'por	31	88	f
Bahrain	22	72	s	Funchal	20	68	s	Montreal	2	36	X	St'kholm	2	36	r
Bangkok	34	93	s	Geneva	13	55	f	Moscow	-6	21	sn	Strasb'rg	14	57	f
Barbados	29	84	c	Gibraltar	18	64	s	Munich	12	54	s	Sydney	24	75	c
Barcelona	14	57	s	Helsinki	-2	28	sn	N Delhi	11	52	f	Tangier	18	64	f
Beirut	16	61	f	Hong K	18	64	c	N York	10	50	f	Tel Aviv	18	64	f
Belgrade	10	50	s	Innsbrck	7	45	s	Nairobi	21	70	c	Tenerife	23	73	s
Berlin	10	50	s	Istanbul	9	48	f	Naples	13	55	f	Tokyo	9	48	s
Bermuda	20	68	f	Jeddah	27	81	f	Nice	12	54	f	Toronto	3	37	c
Biarritz	19	66	s	Jo'burg	25	77	f	Oslo	1	34	c	Tunis	17	63	f
Borde'x	17	63	f	L Angels	12	54	s	Paris	13	55	c	Valencia	20	68	s
Brussels	11	52	r	L Palmas	25	77	s	Peking	1	34	s	Vanc'ver	2	36	f
Budapest	4	39	f	Le Touquet	14	57	f	Perth	28	82	s	Venice	5	41	f
Cairo	19	66	s	Lisbon	15	59	c	Prague	9	48	f	Vienna	11	52	c
Cape Tn	21	70	s	Locarno	7	45	s	Reykjavik	5	41	f	Warsaw	8	46	f
Ch'church	X			Luxembg	9	48	r	Rhodes	17	63	s	Wash'ton	9	48	c
Chicago	0	32	f	Luxor	22	72	s	Rio de J	30	86	f	Wel'ngton	19	66	X
Cologne	11	52	c	Madrid	6	43	fg	Riyadh	22	72	s	Zurich	13	55	s

Temperatures at midday local time X = not available



Changes to the chart above from noon: low G will move quickly northeast maintaining its central pressure; low D will move quickly northeast and deepen; low V will lose its identity

NOON TODAY



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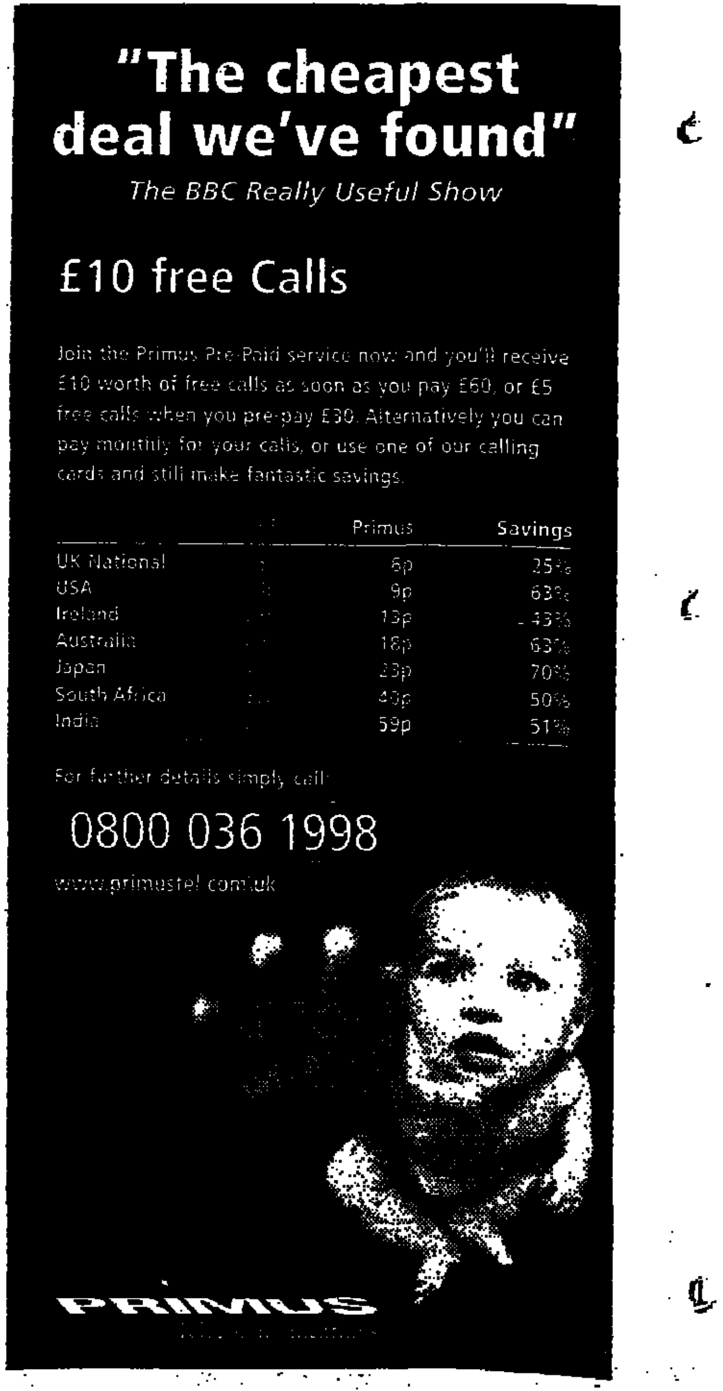

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SHOPPING

Winter coats: the long, tall and short of it

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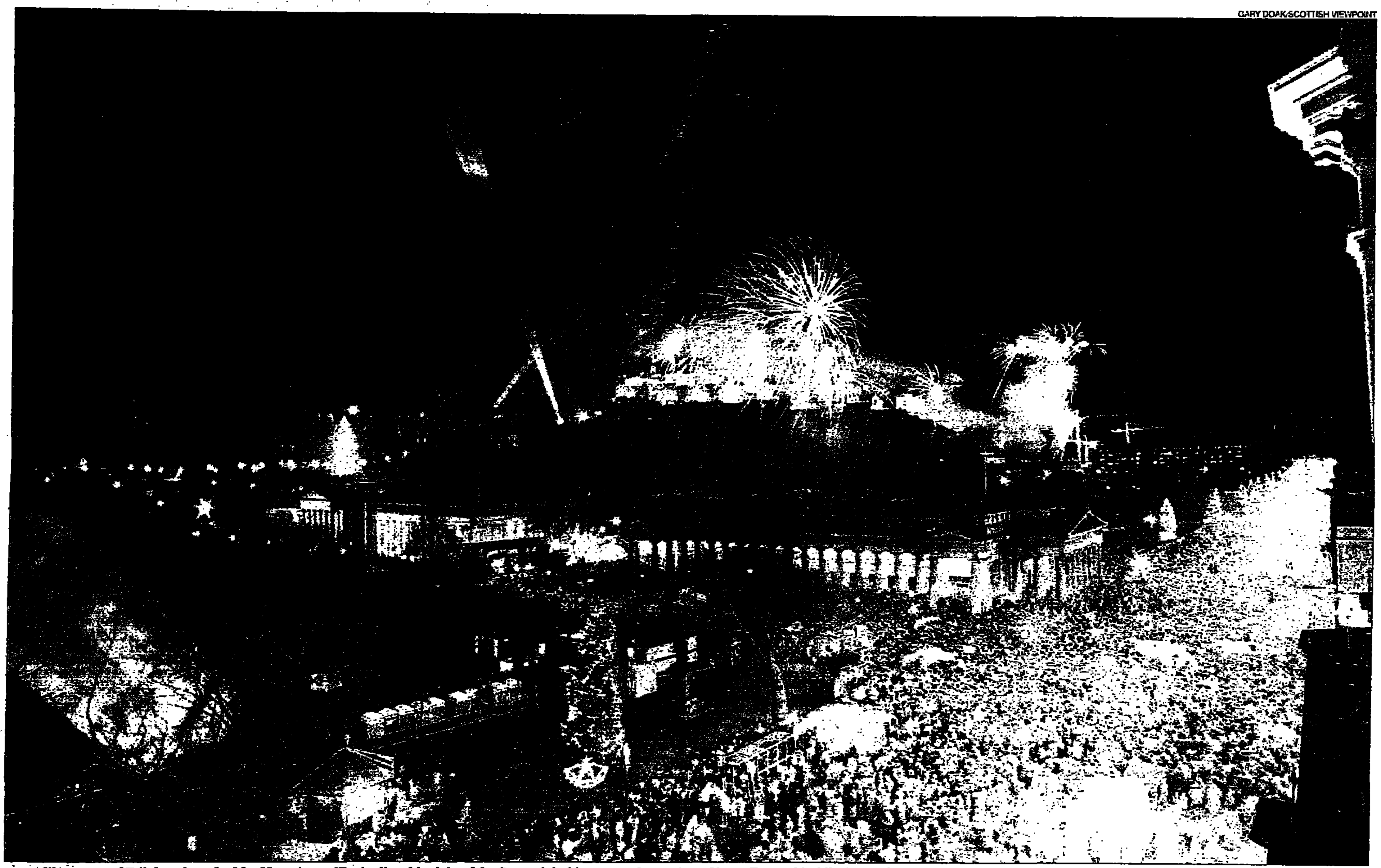
THE TIMES
WEEKEND

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27 1997

Welcome to Scotland the rave

GARY DOAK/SCOTTISH VIEWPOINT



The streets of Edinburgh packed for Hogmanay. The inalienable right of the Scot to join his compatriots on New Year's Eve and imbibe himself into oblivion has been a phenomenon for as long as anyone can remember

Auld Lang Syne meets thrash ceilidh and acid croft – **Magnus Linklater** reports on the changing face of Scotland's New Year celebrations

Standing straight up, jammed between bodies, clutching a quarter bottle of Teacher's as the crowd sways backwards and forwards, the young man in the bomber jacket and the kilt at half-mast seems barely conscious. Something tuneless, more of a gargling sound than a song, emerges from his lips, half-blue with the cold — or possibly alcoholic poisoning. Then, as the New Year bells ring out, and a ragged chorus of *Auld Lang Syne* spreads through the massed ranks in Glasgow's George Square, the crowd parts and the young man pitches forwards, landing with perfect precision along the gutter, where he is, very suddenly, sick. "Welcome," says an anonymous voice, "tae the city o' culture."

This was Glasgow 1990. But the scene could have come from any recent Hogmanay. Some traditions change — and none more rapidly than the way Scotland has begun to celebrate its annual festival of drink and exuberance. But the inalienable right of the Scot to join large numbers of his compatriots on New Year's Eve and imbibe himself into oblivion, has been a phenomenon for as long as anyone can remember. There is a dedication about it that is lacking south of the border. "Scottish people," wrote the poet Edwin Muir, "drink spasmodically and intensely, for the sake of a momentary but complete release, whereas the English like to bathe and puddle about bucolically in a mild puddle of beer."

In 1878, Robert Louis Stevenson described a typical New Year in Edinburgh: "Singly or arm-in-arm, some speechless, others noisy and quarrelsome, the votaries of the New Year go meandering in and out, cannoning one against another; and now and then one falls and lies as he has fallen. Before night, so many have gone to bed or the police office, that the streets seem almost clear."

In those days exchanging gifts of whisky and shortbread and a confection known as the Scots Bun — "heavy, black and inimical to health" as Stevenson described it — were part of the essential tradition. First-footers were always welcome, and if a dark-haired stranger bearing a bottle of whisky and a lump of coal was the first across your threshold, you could count on good luck for the whole of the year to come. My own memories of New Year's Eve in pre-breathalyser days are of long journeys in the country along ice-bound roads,

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هكذا من الإصل

It's still two years off, but already the celebs are planning how to see in the new millennium, says **Katherine Bergen**

Bubbly plans for new year 2000

Mandelson: the man with a dome-sized headache

The Marquess of Bath and friends will celebrate at Longleat: "I have a partiality for table wine"

The Spice Girls (should they still be together in two years' time) say they want to sing *Wannabe* on the Millennium Dome's stage. (Oasis plan no further than their next album)

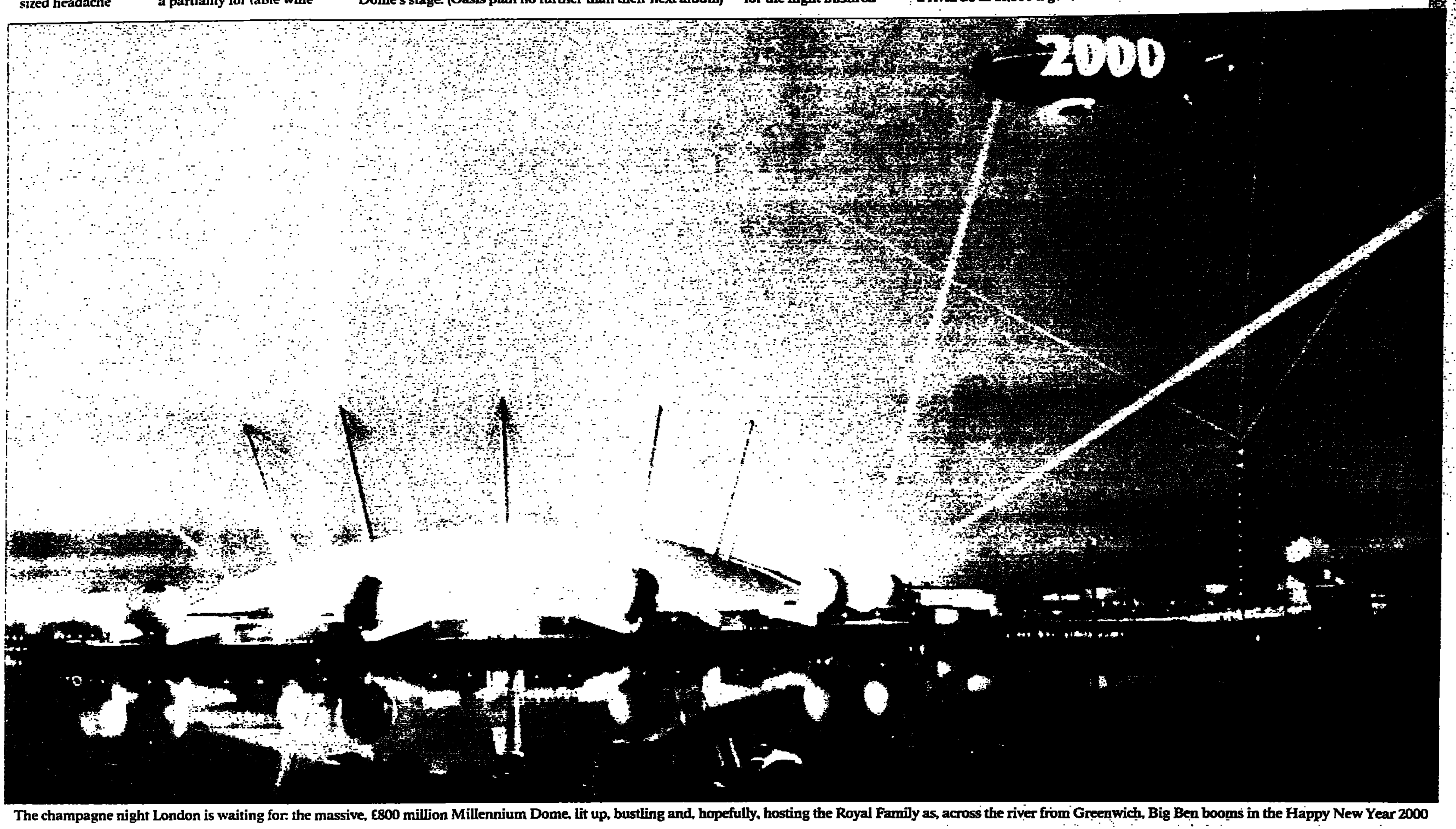
Richard Branson's plan to hire Edinburgh Castle for the night misfired

Harvey Goldsmith has hired the "other dome", the Albert Hall, for a rival do at £1,000 a guest

Baroness Castle: "I'm sick to death" of the millennium concept

Peter de Savary is holding a Norseman's night at Skibo Castle in Dornoch

REX



The champagne night London is waiting for: the massive, £800 million Millennium Dome, lit up, bustling and, hopefully, hosting the Royal Family as, across the river from Greenwich, Big Ben booms in the Happy New Year 2000

There are those, such as Baroness (Barbara) Castle of Blackburn, who are not looking forward to the event at all. She says she is "sick to death" of the millennium. "It is the most artificial concept I've ever heard about. There's not going to be an explosion in the sky. What's so different about a date, for God's sake?"

Larry Adler, the octogenarian harmonica player, is just as caustic. "I thought the millennium was a celebration of Peter Mandelson's birthday," he says. "New Year's Eve 1999 is just the passing of another year. I'm not going to parties. I don't celebrate holidays, not Yom Kippur, Hanukkah or Christmas, and I don't believe in Santa Claus. If it wasn't for the press we wouldn't have this fuss. The whole thing has assumed a fake sense of importance."

Curmudgeons aside, the most common topic of conversation as we bring in 1998 will be the year 2000: "Where are you going to see in the millennium?" A quick straw poll of the office indicates that the bulk of us have no idea, although we are beginning to think about it. Those with a commercial interest in the celebration are streets ahead in their planning, however, even if the £800 million Millennium Dome has all the appearances of a rushed job.

Whatever you think of it, the dome is going to be the focus of British attention at midnight on New Year's Eve 1999. "The opening festivities are still being planned," a spokesman says, "but it is likely to be a formal state opening. The only precedent for this was in 1951 when the Festival of Britain was opened by the King and Queen. It is still early to say, but there is likely to be a live broadcast and a party which uses the dome to its capacity of 35,000 people."

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are almost certain to attend, along with the Prince of Wales and the dome's political architects — Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson and Michael Heseltine.

The Spice Girls, should they still be together, are hoping to sing *Wannabe* on the dome's stage at the stroke of midnight. Oasis, on the other hand, haven't a clue what they will be doing. "Their sights don't go further than their next album," a spokesman says.

As an alternative venue, the promoter Harvey Goldsmith booked London's other dome, the Albert Hall, in 1995 and is planning to charge between four and five thousand people £1,000 each to see the night through. "It will be a music, fashion and style event," he says. Festivities for Goldsmith's event start at 3pm on December 31 and wind up at 8am on January 1.

The most ridiculous gesture in London comes from Uri Geller, who will be standing under Big Ben trying to stop it on the stroke of New Year's Eve. "I'll be linking up with millions of people around the world and will ask everyone to scream 'Stop'."

In anticipation of the capital's influx of celebrators, a West Country businessman, Brian Wilson, claims to be reserving 21,000 prime London hotel rooms for the final week of 1999. Whether this is true or not, luxury hotels, such as the Savoy and the Ritz, have had so many requests that they are planning to draw names from at hat for their parties.

There will be those, like the Marquess of Bath, who are fortunate enough to have their own castle in which to celebrate. He plans to let his children and their friends have the run of Longleat on New Year's Eve while he imbibes not champagne, but a quantity of ordinary wine. "I have not laid down anything special. Anyway, I have a partiality for table wine."

Terry Waite plans to celebrate with a day of activities in his village of Hartest in Suffolk. "We'll have a village walk, followed by a grand millennium breakfast in The Crown public house," he says. A forest will be planted on land bought for the occasion, and Mr Waite will attend evening service where a Millennium Book — one entry per family — is completed. "The book will be a snapshot, a portrait, rather like a millennium Domesday book," he says.

For many, the first snapshot of the millennium will take place in Scotland, where aristocrats and landowners have been inundated with requests for the hire of a castle.

Richard Branson wanted to take over Edinburgh Castle and throw the ball of the evening, with fireworks, live bands, thrills and spills, and Mr Branson, as a suitable climax, ascending into the 21st century in a hot-air balloon. But there was a hitch: Historic Scotland, which manages the castle, turned him down, saying it wasn't for hire.

Mr Branson is proud of his Scottish blood (his granny came from Edinburgh), so he announced, instead, that Virgin is to co-sponsor the city council's Hogmanay celebrations every year into the next millennium.

Offers of up to £10,000 a night have already been made to some owners of castles, and many are receiving several offers a week. Some are holding back for bigger bids. At Scone Palace, near Perth, the Earl and Countess of Mansfield have turned down three offers, including one from a wealthy Arab, to rent out the Royal Long Gallery for Hogmanay. "The whole estate was rented to a Swiss client in February," the earl explains.

Peter de Savary, who owns Skibo Castle in Dornoch, is also cashing in on castlemania by creating a Viking village in honour of the Norsemen who first settled there. There will be spit-roasts and fine wines, for a minimum of £400 a day.

Wealthy Londoners, such as the financial consultant John Lamb and his family, are already choosing their tartan for the night. They have confirmed their booking for Duns Castle, Berwickshire, at more than £10,000 a night. "I needed a castle big enough for all the family," he says. "Duns has 14 bedrooms, which will sleep 28 of our relatives. We want to invite 50 family members, so we'll be renting five or six estate houses as well."

On New Year's Eve 1999, the Lamb family will be holding their own Highland Games in front of their castle before dinner in the baronial hall.

If the Lamb family has yet to sort out its drink requirements for the evening, this will not be for lack of endeavour on behalf of the champagne houses, which have hyped the market to give the impression that there would be a shortage of bubbly come midnight on New Year's Eve 1999. One mystery buyer, thought to be Bill Wyman, the Rolling Stones' former bassist, is said to have put down £500,000 to ensure his supply of Krug.

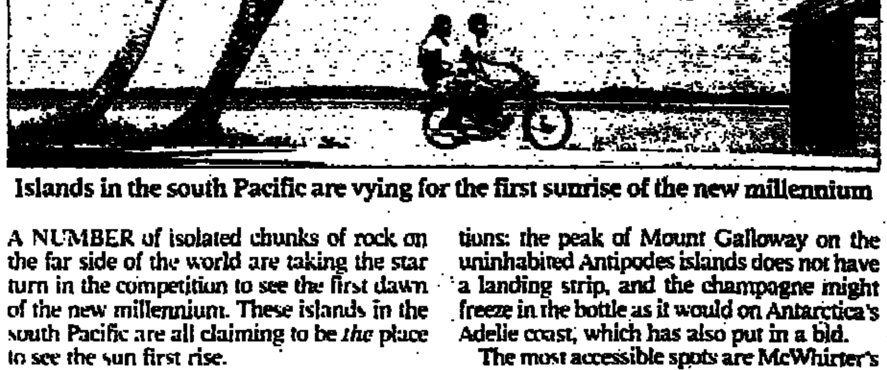
But, as *The Times* wine writer Jane MacQuitty has pointed out, stocks of champagne are at an all-time high: "Of all the scandals wine merchants have become embroiled in of late, most pernicious has been the notion that Britain will be drained dry of champagne by the millennium," she says. "Humbug! The Champenois do not crow about the millions of bottles of bubbly slumbering in their cellars. Even if you leave millennium celebration champagne purchases until the afternoon of December 31, 1999, you'll still have plenty of non-vintage and even vintage champagnes to choose from."

Nevertheless, the Champenois anticipate that consumption will increase by 30 per cent and that drinkers will move up a level in quality. As a result, 37 champagne companies have already launched special *cuvées* to help party-goers for the millennium: Roederer with 2,000 individually numbered methuselahs of "Collection 2000"; Perrier Jouet with 2,000 jeroboams of "Reserve Belle Epoque" at £1,000 apiece; Moët & Chandon with jeroboams of Dom Perignon 1993; and Pol Roger with 1,000 examples of its Winston Churchill 1988 — also in jeroboams.

For every Lady Castle or Larry Adler who chooses to eschew the champagne and sit out the celebrations, there will be others who will celebrate twice. British Airways is laying on four Concordes for passengers who want to bring in the new year in a hangar at Heathrow, then fly to New York for a repeat performance.

A trip into the 21st century: Travel, page 17

SEEING IN THE **FIRST DAWN** OF A NEW MILLENNIUM



Islands in the south Pacific are vying for the first sunrise of the new millennium

A NUMBER of isolated chunks of rock on the far side of the world are taking the star turn in the competition to see the first dawn of the new millennium. These islands in the south Pacific are all claiming to be *the* place to see the sun first rise.

British interests are represented by Norris McWhirter, the publisher of the *Guinness Book of Records*, who has bought the rights to Hapeka Hill on Pitt Island, one of the Chatham Islands 500 miles east of New Zealand. He claims that he will be able to see further over the horizon than anyone else from his chosen spot. A rival record-breaker has threatened to scupper his chances by floating above the Chatham Islands in a hot-air balloon.

Some of the contending dawn-spotting sites would not make for convivial celebrations: the peak of Mount Galloway on the uninhabited Antipodes islands does not have a landing strip, and the champagne might freeze in the bottle as it would on Antarctica's Adelie coast, which has also put in a bid.

The most accessible spots are McWhirter's Pitt Island; the tropical Nuku'alofa atoll in Tonga; and Caroline Island, part of the Kiribati chain in the south Pacific. Although the sunrise in Tonga is an hour behind Pitt's, the King of Tonga has been emphasising his trump card: sensational beaches.

The most audacious attempt to capture the millennium-spotters' trophy comes from the Kiribati government, which has moved the International Date Line which runs through its archipelago. Its islands all now share the same day, and dawn on January 1, 2000, should break 20 minutes ahead of Pitt Island.

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هكذا من الأصل

Wear anything you like as long as it's tartan. A woman dancing at Hogmanay — the Highland reel of course

MARIUS ALEXANDER

Entertainment is free at this time of year: the French street theatre performing jazz in Prince's Street, Edinburgh

STB/STILL MOVING

The ceilidh, a party where everyone contributes, is enjoying renewed popularity all over Scotland

Continued from page 1

and a guaranteed party, laced with alcohol, at almost every stop. We drove back with exaggerated care, giving every other car a wide berth as we weaved our way home.

All that, of course, has gone. To go any distance in a car these days is considered positively anti-social: the visiting, the first-footing, the coal and the whisky, [illegible] increasingly redundant. Instead we had Hogmanay on television, invented in Scotland but exported worldwide, courtesy of the BBC and an institution called the White Heather Club.

It consisted of stars like Andy Stewart, swathed in lace and tartan, singing *Donald Where's Your Troosers?*, or Kenneth McKellar with *The Song of the Clyde*; Jimmy Shand and his band, Moira Anderson, and dainty girls in white blouses, with laced pumps and pointed toes, dancing a Schottische; or young men with fixed smiles and an air of desperate gaiety, whisking their partners through an Eightsome Reel.

A Japanese tourist enjoys the infectious atmosphere

It is hard to explain quite why the Scots became so addicted to this parody of their own culture, but addicted they seemed to be. The writer Tom Nairn, conceding its enormous popularity, described it as "a huge self-contained universe of Kitsch;" he thought it was probably endemic. "Tartanry," he said, "will not wither away, if only because it possesses the force of its own vulgarity — immunity from doubt and higher culture. Whatever form of self-rule Scotland acquires, this is a substantial part of the inheritance bequeathed to it. Prayers to the country's essentially socialist or democratic Geist will not make it turn a hair."

He was wrong. Twenty years on, the Scots have tired of the old routine. Whether it is maturity, or boredom, or simply a need to find something new to enjoy, they have reinvented Hogmanay. The prospect of home rule may have sharpened the senses of a nation looking to new forms of culture. Its youth demanded change, and change is what it has got.

In Edinburgh, the capital city, there will be, in the last days of December and on into the New Year, a five-day festival which has, in the space of just a few years, grown into the largest of its kind in Europe. Some 200,000 people will pour into the city, to enjoy an extraordinary range of entertainment, from jazz and classical music to street theatre and fireworks.

In place of Tom Nairn's tartanry, there will be Generik Vapeur, a post-modern street theatre group from France; street performers from Melbourne, Milan, Paris and Lyon; instead of Andy Stewart, there is the cult Scottish group, Texas, and, in defiance of the White Heather Club there is salsa dancing in the Club Latino, or a send-up of Scottish dance bands called the Jimmy Shandrix Experience.

Not that the Scots have abandoned their past traditions — far from it. They have simply adapted them. Top fiddle players have made connections with musicians from Scandinavia to the southern states of America and have woven the music they have discovered into their repertoire, mixing it freely with traditional Scottish melodies.

The bagpipes are as popular as ever, but they have been subverted. Martyn Bennett, a brilliant young piper, whose audiences are equally young, combines his playing with electronic accompaniment, crossing over into jazz, folk or even rave music.

Popular groups like Runrig, Capercaillie, and Deaf Shepherd, attract capacity audiences, using Scottish folk music but playing it in ways they'd never have recognised at the White Heather Club. The ceilidh, a party where everyone contributes, enjoys a new popularity, with clubs like the Riverside in Glasgow, or the Tron in Edinburgh, packed every Saturday. These days it is called a "thrash ceilidh" — where, as *The Scotsman* columnist Tom Morton puts it, "they play Jimmy Shand at three times the speed and four times as badly."

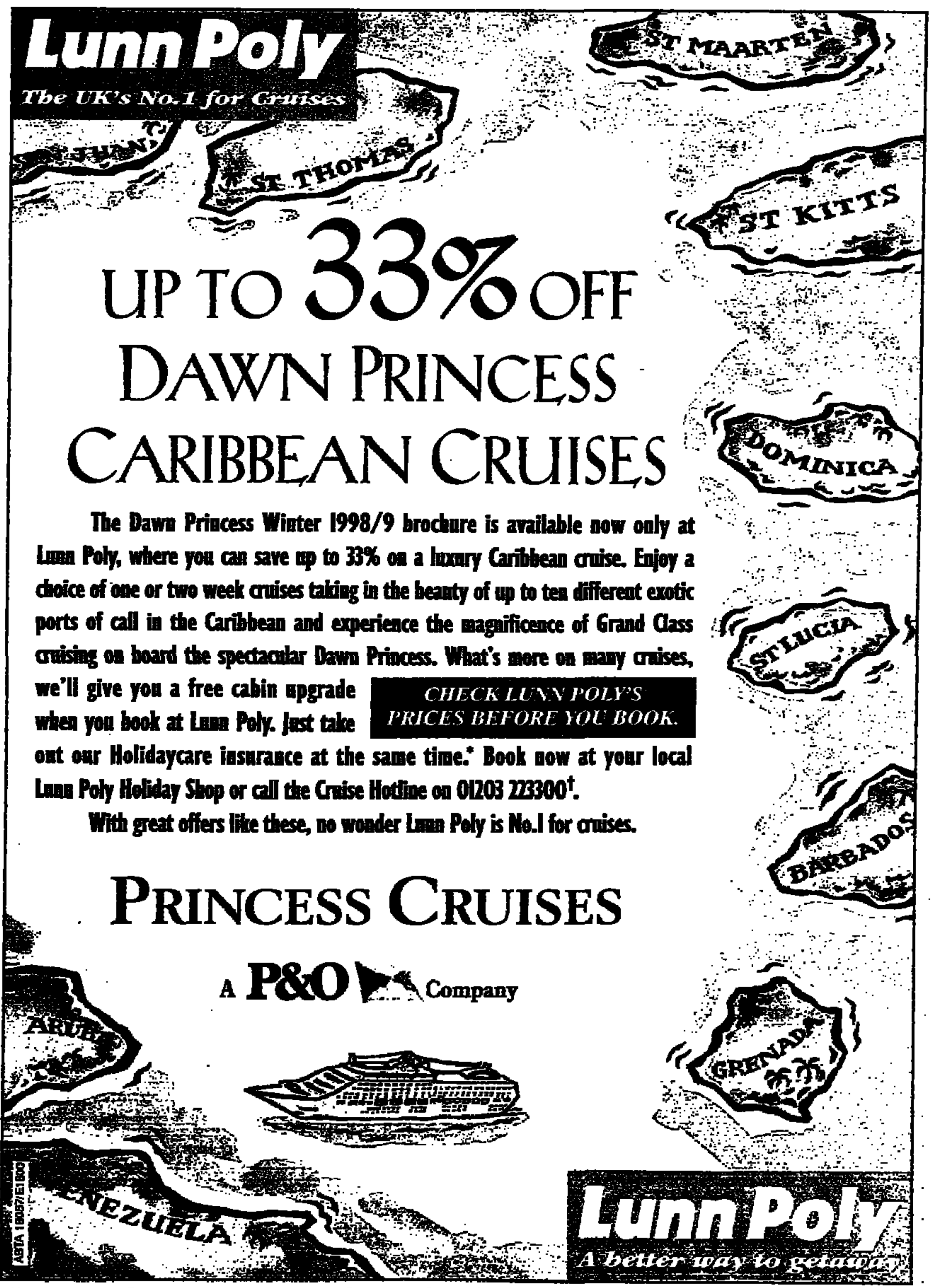
Peter Irvine, whose agency helped transform the Edinburgh Hogmanay event, says that the models for this new Scotland come from far afield — Sydney's Mardi Gras celebrations or Basel's January parades rather than the ghosts of Hogmanay past. "There's still the same basic need to congregate but the aspirations are far wider."

And if this is indeed the expression of a new Scotland, it is a thoroughly welcome one. It looks outwards to the wider world rather than inwards on its own jaded past. It draws on tradition and adapts it rather than simply recycling it in an increasingly tired version.

As a result it has begun to attract a growing international audience. Last year, Edinburgh strained at the seams as 300,000 people poured into the city centre for the extravagant party in Princes Street Gardens, and the police feared for their safety. This time numbers will be restricted to less than 200,000. You will need a ticket for the major events.

Some things of course will never change. This New Year's Eve again, there will doubtless be drink taken, as they say in Scotland. If your idea of the perfect Hogmanay is clutching a half bottle of vodka and hanging on the neck of a perfect stranger trying to remember the words of *Flower of Scotland*, you will find no lack of enthusiasts to share the experience. But, before you slide into unconsciousness, you may find that this year you've had a better time of it.

The way we were: Andy Stewart's programme was exported worldwide. Right, preparing the haggis



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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Hoddle should give youth its head at the World Cup

EDDIE KEOGH

Owen, right, is pushing his way into England's front line

BRIAN GLANVILLE

Youth will be served as the boxing adage: somewhat undermined by the longevity of such as George Foreman and Larry Holmes. In football, one is not quite sure. Less so than ever after Glenn Hoddle's extraordinary, gratuitous and surely excessive critique of Michael Owen: at just 18, the great hope of English football.

Hoddle, plainly, is as yet unconvinced. "There are certain things he needs to stamp out of his game," the England coach said, after watching Owen play, effectively, for England Under-21 against Greece last week, "and out of his off-the-pitch situation as well. I am not going into details [*why not?*] but he is not the finished article everybody says he is."

Everybody? Hardly anybody, surely. Owen's admirers, of whom I am very much one, are impressed by his tremendous pace and the way he uses it, his precocious confidence, his intelligent positioning and passing, his courage to take on and resist the buffeting of bigger opponents.

As things stand, Hoddle must surely feel the hot breath of a gift-horse on his face. As the England coach, it is his job to encourage young talent — of which, goodness knows, we have little enough — rather than undermine it.

Yes, I would be delighted to see Owen in England's eventual World Cup party. With Alan Shearer's recovery still uncertain, Ian Wright so sadly out of form, Robbie Fowler, Owen's fellow Liverpudlian — with whom Hoddle may somehow be confusing him — a present disappointment, Owen might prove the man England needs.

Hoddle, perhaps, might cast his mind back to his own debut for England, a brilliant display against Bulgaria at Wembley, capped by a spectacular goal. Whereupon Ron Greenwood, the England manager, dropped him from the next game with the lapidary words: "Disappointment is part of football."

Later, Hoddle had to endure sustained humiliation from Bobby Robson, Greenwood's successor, until at last, in England's American training camp before the 1986 World Cup, light dawned and Robson joyously compared Hoddle to his idol, Johnny Haynes. I had not realised the Road to Damascus passed through Colorado Springs. What is it about England managers?

But not only about them. When Argentina were due to stage the 1978 World Cup, their manager, César Luis Menotti, decided to omit his own protégé, Diego Maradona, then 17.

The actual inside left, Beto Alonso, did well enough and Argentina, after all, did win the World Cup, but Maradona's virtuosity might have made things easier. It was, of course, different with the incomparable Pelé, who might well have been regarded as the template rather than the exception who proves the rule, with his extreme youth.

Pelé was playing for Brazil at 16. At 17, he excelled in the 1958 World Cup, scoring a hat-trick against France in the semi-final, two glorious goals against Sweden in the final.

Ever since Matt Busby's adventurous day, Manchester United have been prepared commendably to give youth its fling, hence the nickname of the Busby Babes.

Many years ago, after a match at Chelsea, I asked Busby about this policy, to hear the simple but cogent reply: "If you don't put them in, you can't know what you've got."

The muscular Duncan Edwards was United's regular left half from the age of 17 until his cruel death after the Munich air crash at the age of 21. By then he was an England star.

Later, George Best would scintillate as a teenager on United's wings. "If I'd been born ugly," he once modestly said, "you'd never have heard of Pelé."

John Charles, who became the hero of Juventus, for whom he scored nearly 100 league goals in four seasons, was a dominating centre half for Leeds United at 17 and was capped for Wales at that age.

Immediately before the war, there were Wolverhampton Wanderers' so-called Buckley Babes, manager Major Frank Buckley's teenagers, allegedly fed on monkey gland tablets.

Jimmy Mullen played in the 1939 FA Cup semi-final at the age of 16, and went on to win England caps well after the war.

Go slightly further back and we find another precocious outside left, Cliff "Boy" Bastin, of Arsenal, who moved in a cocoon of calm, and had won every honour in the game at the age of 19.

Besides Owen, we have another remarkable 18-year-old in Danny Cadamarteri, of Everton, a compound of pace, power, courage and confidence; qualities displayed in their time by Pelé, Maradona, Best, Charles and Bastin, not to mention Owen.

Such players are, blessedly, hard to discourage. But Hoddle should stop denigrating Owen. For his own sake.

Barnsley's discarded hero has no regrets

Mark Hodkinson meets the player left behind by his club's historic rise

ALAN WELLER PAUL BARKER

Now and then: Wilkinson, at Millwall, can look back happily to the day last season when his goal helped to end Barnsley's 110-year wait to reach football's top division

LIFE AT THE TOP

The ball was punted through the drizzle towards Bradford City's penalty area. Amid a battery of elbows and knees jostling for kicking space, Paul Wilkinson volunteered his forehead. The ball ricocheted beyond the goalkeeper, Aidan Davison, and sailed into the net.

At 3.21pm on Saturday, April 26, 1997, Wilkinson found himself at the epicentre of British football. His goal had set Barnsley on course for promotion to football's top flight after a 110-year wait; hundreds had worn the Barnsley shirt before him, but he was the chosen man.

After the match, the players, with their wives and girlfriends, celebrated long into the night and Wilkinson was fêted at every turn. He was bought enough drinks to last another 110 years and his fiancée had to step aside while appreciative fans planted beery kisses on his cheeks. "Thank you, thank you," they blubbered, and swore their everlasting love.

Sentimentality is an indulgence afforded to football supporters. We reminisce, rue and romanticise until, eventually, even 4-0 home defeats take on a charm of their own. Unfortunately, football clubs are not privy to this luxury, as Wilkinson soon discovered.

As Wilkinson punched the air and danced across the turf, he was not to know that it would be his final full appearance at Oakwell in a Barnsley shirt. He had played in all but one of Barnsley's games in the first division, but fell foul of the paradox that lifting the club to a higher status also lifted him out of a job.

The wealth generated by promotion enabled Danny Wilson, the Barnsley manager, to purchase Georgi Hristov from Partizan Belgrade and, a few weeks into the campaign, Ashley Ward from Derby County.

Just five months after his moments of glory, Wilkinson was collecting his boots from Oakwell and heading to London where he joined Millwall in a £150,000 deal. The Barnsley supporters had promised him the world, but the club balked at the two-year contract he felt he deserved. "It can be a harsh world, but ultimately we accept as footballers that we are commodities. I had become surplus to requirements at Barnsley," Wilkinson said.

He joined Barnsley on a free transfer from Middlesbrough, where he had spent four seasons. He was reunited soon afterwards with his former Middlesbrough strike partner, John Hendrie. The pair are efficacious: they have scored 114 goals between them in five seasons together. "I was struck with Barnsley straight away. It is a homely club but it has a lot of ambition. There was a real buzz about the town," Wilkinson said. He felt this energy at close quarters since he lived in Cawthorne, on the outskirts of the town.

While Barnsley's trademark last season was thoughtful, passing football, Wilkinson felt his role was more rudimentary. "It was a real pass-and-move team, but I gave them another dimension. I was the tallest, and since I'm not the most skilful player in the world, they tended to use me more as a battering ram and play off me," he said.

At Christmas last year, Barnsley had lost just three times in 23 league matches. They have won just four games in 20 this season and have suffered the ignominy of conceding 51 league goals already. Few Barnsley fans expected anything but a fraught battle for survival, but, inevitably, there have been a few grumbles muttered into beers. Some feel that Wilson tinkered needlessly with the winning team.

"I think Danny should have given last year's team longer to come good, but I'm bound to think that, aren't I?" Wilkinson said. "I have no hard feelings towards him or Barnsley, I always look for their score first."

Wilkinson's final appearance for Barnsley was against Chelsea when they were beaten 6-0 in August. He was substituted at half-time and had a spectator's view of the second-half annihilation. "I think they've learnt a lot since then and have adapted well. There is no problem at Barnsley because no one expected them to survive anyway," he says. "I've a sneaking feeling, though, that they are going to stay up. I don't think people appreciate the spirit and resolve within the club."

Instead of a season at football's top table, Wilkinson is among the blood and thud of the journeymen of the Nationwide League second division. He suffered a "whack on the ankle" last Saturday in Millwall's win against Wycombe Wanderers and has spent most of this week under treatment. "It's a lot more physical than I expected," he said. He cannot complain too volubly since Billy Bonds, the Millwall manager, signed him chiefly because he can remember fractious encounters when he was a defender with West Ham United and Wilkinson played for Nottingham Forest. "I left him with six stitches in his forehead after one match — and he still signed me," Wilkinson said.

He has moved with his fiancée to Bromley, Kent, and, though he recalls his time at Barnsley fondly, he has no qualms about swapping clubs for the seventh time in his career. "I would have loved to have stayed there for another couple of seasons, but that's not what I was offered," Wilkinson said. "That's just the way it is in football."

Spartak's brave incorruptibles earn just reward

Off the line by Russell Kempson

NOT long after the Spartak Moscow players checked into the Oktyabrskaya hotel on the eve of their important Russian League match against Rotor Volgograd, the telephones began ringing off the hook. Representatives of the local *Intimdosug* — "Intimate Leisure" — firm were apparently touting for business at the bargain rate of 200,000 roubles (£20) per hour.

Oleg Romantsev, the Spartak coach, happily reported that such "provocation" was resisted and that all of his brave lads had declined the "sweet-voiced suggestions". And to be absolutely safe, they refused to walk farther than 15 metres from the hotel entrance. Spartak's clean-living souls went on to beat Volgograd and became Russian champions for the fifth time.

Parkinson floored

Phil Parkinson, the Reading midfield player and one of the more rugged practitioners in the Nationwide League, has been involved in his fair share of incidents in a career spanning 13 seasons. It was thus barely surprising when his two-year-old son, George, slipped over while kicking a ball around in the players' bar at Reading's Elm Park ground and fractured his left leg.

A foot-to-thigh plaster now covers the broken limb but Parkinson Jr, like dad, should soon be back terrorising opponents.

Tea and sympathy

Howard Wilkinson, the Football Association technical director, is *not* noted for his histrionics. Dour, boring even, but never overdemonstrative ... or is he? Ian Baird, the recently retired captain of Brighton, tells an enlightening anecdote from an FA Cup tie against Watford at Vicarage Road. "Howard wasn't too happy at half-time and came in ranting and raving," Baird recalled. "He picked up a teapot and slung it at the wall but, unfortunately, it rebounded back and the tea went all over his face. He was writhing on the floor in agony." Must have been strong tea.

Dancing Dell boys

The Dell, Southampton, is much the same as most football grounds before kick-off, with street-sellers hawking everything from dodgyburgers to programmes, from fanzines to T-shirts. Before the match against Leicester City, many Saints supporters were made an offer with a difference when they were handed leaflets advertising the delights of The Silhouette nightclub in the city. Closer inspection revealed its speciality to be topless table-dancing.

■ Scotland may have to make their excuses and leave early from the World Cup knees-up in France next year, but the omnipresent Tartan Army is sure to create a favourable impression. Yet when they invade Saint-Etienne on June 23 for the game against Morocco, they may be outchanted by their rival fans. "We will be the best-supported team in group A," Mohamed Berrada, the Moroccan Ambassador in Paris, said. "There will be displays of the country's folklore in the stands, lots of banners and countless demonstrations of support of all kinds." Morocco has more than 800,000 expatriates living in France.

☐ STRANGE BUT TRUE: Duncan Ferguson, the former Scotland striker rumoured to be wanting to leave Goodison Park, has had the Everton club badge tattooed on an arm.

McLean seeking to draw Rangers' sting

By Kevin McCarra

FEW visiting teams approach Ibrox in a mood of optimism. However, having beaten Rangers once in the Bell's Scottish League premier division and once in the Coca-Cola Cup already this season, Dundee United may view the game today against the champions with equanimity.

Over the past few weeks, it has been the rest of the clubs that have left them in the doldrums. United were the rising force in the premier division until they met Celtic twice in the space of eight days last month. The league game was lost 4-0 and, in the Coca-Cola Cup final, Tommy McLean's team were beaten 3-0.

In the three matches that followed, United also failed to score, let alone win. The sequence was broken only last Saturday, when they recorded a 2-1 victory over a St Johnstone team that had been reduced to ten men. It hardly constituted a resurgence, nor would it pass for the harbinger of a happy afternoon at Ibrox.

United, all the same, are better than most at assimilating their disappointments and drawing shrewd conclusions. When they first met Rangers this season, Marco Negri scored five times and United lost 5-1. It is hard to think of another club that could so successfully revamp themselves and beat the champions in their next two meetings, rationing Negri to a single goal over that pair of games.

If Maurice Malpas remains his prescient self in defence and if, beside him, Steven Pressley recovers the form that vanished in the two heavy beatings by Celtic, then United could concoct a tense match with Rangers. Even so, the visitors' fortitude should prove insufficient today. There was an intimidating potency about Rangers' 5-2 mauling of Heart of Midlothian last weekend.

Walter Smith's team have been peculiarly inconsistent this season, but there was such an abundance of fine play in the trouncing of Hearts that some of it must surely slop over into the weeks ahead.

Celtic, with the sturdiness that has seen them keep a clean sheet in their past six matches, look equipped to maintain a gruelling struggle and they are only one point behind Rangers in the league. Today, they travel to face St Johnstone and may be able to field Marc Rieper, the centre half who is now back in full training after a calf strain.

Hearts, the third-placed team who take on Dunfermline at East End Park today, trail Celtic by a single point but the Edinburgh club will find it exceedingly hard to persuade the public that they are not, in reality, lagging far behind the Old Firm. No matter what the league table might say, a credibility gap has opened up after defeats by Celtic and Rangers in their past two fixtures.

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Cool cuts for winter warmers

In town this year, it has been hard to tell the difference between coats and jackets. Overcoats have been knee-length, tailored pieces by designers who favour simplicity — Jil Sander, Calvin Klein, Tomasz Starzewski — and made of uncharacteristically fine fabric. They have been stark, with delicate collars, narrow belts and minimal detailing. Longish jackets, in other words.

Away from the land of business suits and micro skirts, however, the greatcoat is still king, and long, sweeping styles that are warm yet practical reign supreme. But unlike last year, this season's offerings are shorter and more elegant. Louise Grunberg of Feminella — which sells about 50,000 coats a year, from £260 to £400 — says the trend is for glamour: "Coats that you felt you had to buy, because they were too luxurious to leave behind." Best-sellers have been those with a Japanese feel, or 1950s styles with flounced skirts in cashmere or angora.

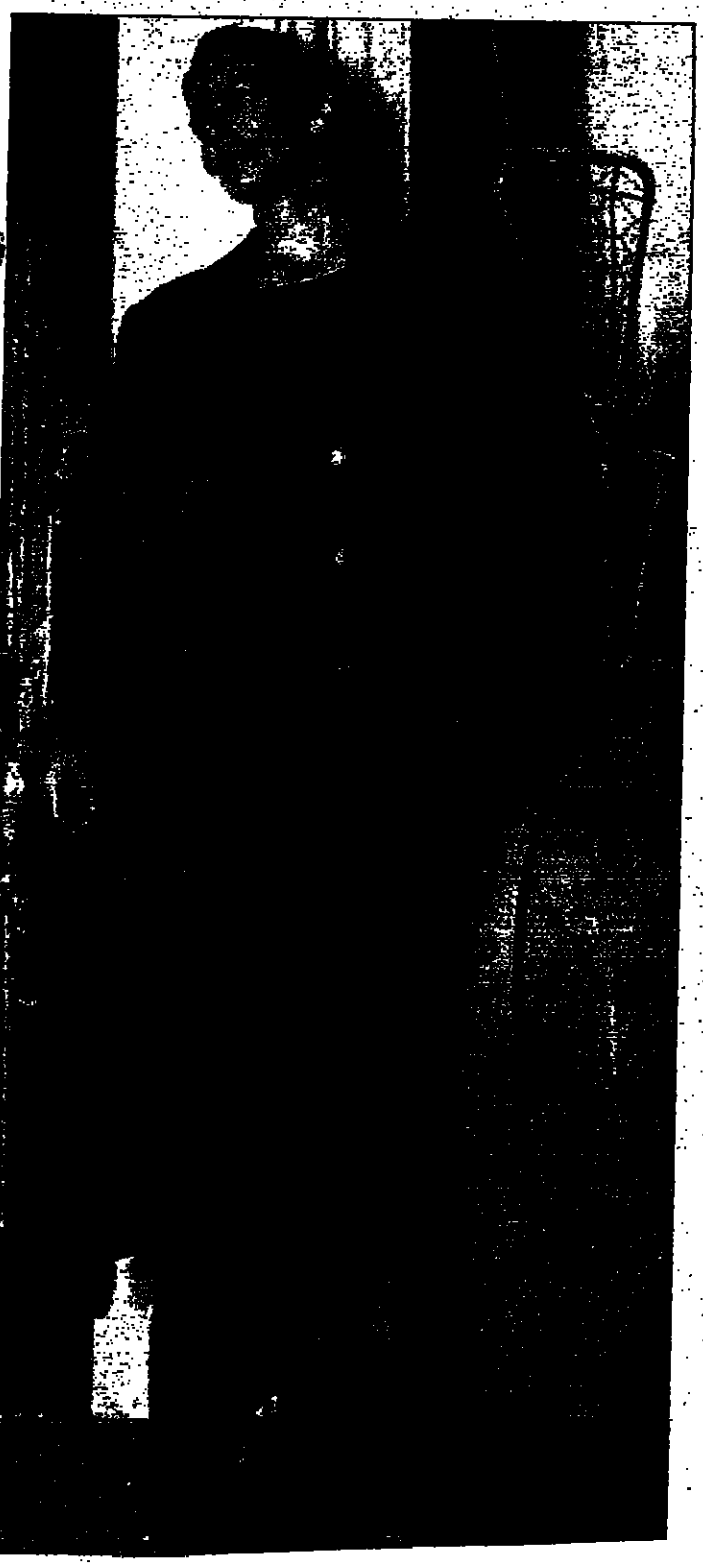
Although fashion editors have been queueing for particular models — Prada's double-face cashmere greatcoat, Marc Jacob's bohemian herringbone design, Tom Ford's fox-fur collared wool cover-up and Alexander McQueen's pinstriped, shapely dresscoat — there are high-street items just as covetable, for half the price.

For those who favour generous measures and broad shoulders, there is a long wool coat with fake-fur trim by Pearce II Fionda at Debenhams for £200, a sharply tailored grey version by Marks & Spencer for £150, and military-style coats in Jigsaw and Hobbs for less than £200.

Although many women have already bought their winter coats, thousands will be at the sales today, eager for a classic. All the department stores listed in our sales guide (pages 14-15) have coats, many at half price — from a Nicole Farhi swing coat with fake-fur collar for £299 at Fenwick to a brown wool Episode overcoat with fake leopardskin collar for £179, and long black fake-fur coat at H&M for £49.99.

LISA GRAINGER

ABOVE: military-style black coat, £290; black suede boots, £125, Hobbs, 84 King's Road, SW3, and branches nationwide (0171-586 5550). Diamond-patterned tights, £6, Aristoc, department stores nationwide (01773 525520)
BELOW: charcoal wool-mix coat, £150, Marks & Spencer, selected branches nationwide (0171-935 4422). Sheer knitted vest top, £390, Gucci, 18 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6707). Pinstriped pencil skirt, £190, made to order, Clements Ribeiro (0171-409 7719). Grey metallic shoes, £295, Gina, 189 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 2932). Tights, Aristoc, as before



LEFT: Black leather coat, £1,750, Scappa, Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-491 7833). Red fine-knit rollneck, £68, John Smedley, Selfridges, W1 (0171-580 5075). Grey wool trousers, from £140 to £175, to order, Burberry, 18-22 Haymarket, SW1; and branches nationwide (0171-734 5929) Black and brown leather court shoes, £39.99, Ravel, 184-188 Oxford Street, W1, and branches (0171-436 3126)

ABOVE: brown frock coat, £295. Cream knit rollneck, £169, Mulberry, 41 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900)

ABOVE: orange and grey checked coat, £338, Indivi by Atsuro Tayama, Browns Focus, 38-39 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-734 0123). Black rollneck, £49.99, Kookaï, 123 Kensington High Street, W8, and branches (0171-937 4411)

Photographs by **Richard Burns.** Hair and make-up by **Sally Kvalheim** for Jo Hansford (0171-495 7774). Styling by **Amandip Uppal.** Shot on location at **Charlton House Hotel**, Charlton Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 4PR (01749 342008)

THREE OF A KIND

No woman can do without a pair of long boots this winter. Here are three of the best. LG

Burgundy stretch suede boots, £450, Gina, 189 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 2932)

Gold embroidered boot, £225, Hobbs, selected branches (0171-586 5550)

Black leather silver buckle boots, £89, Clarks, branches nationwide (0990 785886)

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Cleaning up in Wiltshire

ROBIN MAYES

Sitting pretty in his garden on the River Avon: James Dyson, who made a fortune from other people's dirt with his invention of the bagless vacuum cleaner

ME AND MY GARDEN: JAMES DYSON

James Dyson spent two seasons drunk in charge of a stall at the Chelsea Flower Show. Maybe you were one of those who bought one of his Ballbarrows, causing him to have to take barrow loads of money to his bank in nearby Sloane Square and return for celebratory drinks.

The barrows he invented paved the way for the Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner, which put him 178th on *The Sunday Times* 1997 Rich List at about £100 million.

The invention has also allowed him and his wife, Deirdre, a painter, to buy Lord Puttnam's old mill house, with 38 acres of land and up to six acres of water, in a Wiltshire valley seven miles from the Dyson factory.

"I hate commuting and so it was a necessity to live somewhere in this area," says Mr Dyson, who spent six years at the Royal College of Art. His father died when he was nine and his mother died when he was in his early twenties, before he had made his fortune.

Few people, other than friends, bother to explore the small dead-end lane that leads up to the Dysons' stately wrought iron gates. These open on to a large parterre courtyard flanked on two sides by the old mill house and on the third by the River Avon, which turned the old mill.

Box hedges are used to line formal beds that are centered around a tall stone fountain. Off-white roses fill the beds around the fountain, while beds at either end of the courtyard are a mass of lavender. Surprisingly, this large parterre was made and planted only nine months ago, but it appears to have been in place for years (the pop-up irrigation system has helped).

Mr Dyson designed every centimetre of it, painstakingly mapping out precisely how each of the hundreds of different-sized cobbles should be set. "I did it on a drawing board," he says. "At work, everything is done on computers, but I miss the pencil and drawing board; that is a craft — my old-fashioned way.

"I wanted the paths wide enough for two lovers to walk side by side easily without feeling squashed."

Vast stone vases dot the edge of the courtyard and an old millstone has been elevated to form a table in which the cracks have sprouted weeds and nettles.

"We are severe about colour. On the whole, red and pinks are vulgar and tarty. We have only one flower bed, but a lot of area which needs tending, even if it doesn't need weeding."

The flower bed is in one of three secret gardens — enclosures along the river — this one banded by a curving brick wall which encompasses a planting of dahlias, delphiniums, alchemilla, asters, lambs ears and the early signs of oriental poppies.

The Avon snakes through the garden, making a small island of one part of it. Lord Puttnam built a series of humped bridges, one planted with wisteria to look like a Monet painting, and another, called the Mini-Monet, tiny in scale which crosses a rill-like tributary.

A wild bog garden is planted around the rill with gunnera, willows and yellow skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*). Downstream, Mr Dyson fly-fishes for trout, his favourite place being a small cascade of the Avon topped by stepping stones.

It is a well-used garden. Every evening the Dysons walk in it — in winter it can be lit by floodlight — and every other day Mr Dyson takes his three-mile run through part of the garden. Earlier this year, it was the venue for his fiftieth birthday party.

Things have come a long way since the young Dysons, weighed down by debt, did all their own weeding, mowing and planting. Now they do not know where the key to the garden shed is, and the maintenance is left entirely to one full-time and two part-time gardeners, and the estate manager who is seeding a 16-acre wildflower meadow.

Lord Puttnam planted 22,000 trees, Mr Dyson six, but he invested in the ultimate boy's toy: a cat-tread digger which can scoop out trenches and plant trees.

His plans are to build an orangery, a swimming pool and a tennis court and to plant an orchard with apples, greengages and plums and a mulberry tree in the middle. There will be pleached limes at one end and espaliered pears at the other.

The Dysons built their last garden, near Bath, from scratch. "We did a lot in 18 years — made a rose arbour, rose garden, pleached limes and all the trendy things, but we moved because we wanted a bigger garden," says Mr Dyson, who also has a garden of about 40 acres in Provence. "I think French formal gardens are wonderful with their simple shapes of ovals and circles, and the sheer scale."

He has fond memories of his mother's "wonderfully overgrown" garden in Cley, Norfolk. "She was very interested in plants and how they grow, along with French architecture, so I got dragged around galleries and gardens. In the end it all sank in, and I am behaving exactly as my mother did 30 years ago.

"The money makes the difference," Mr Dyson says. "What is really lovely about life is the struggle and not having loads of money. I have this fear of going bankrupt because I've been so overdrawn for so much of my life, but it never kept me awake. I still have that same worry because, although the company is successful, we are still very ambitious.

"The difference is the amount of cash in my pocket. The struggle is in me and it will go on. It's like the garden: we are always changing it and, if we stop, we move."

JANE OWEN

STEPHEN ANDERTON'S GARDEN ANSWERS

Q About four years ago I was given a self-sown seedling of *Clematis tangutica*. For three years it hardly grew. Then, last spring, away it went, with 6ft-8ft shoots in all directions. I trained it up a southwest-facing wall, where *C. montana* flourishes, but it didn't flower. Can I hope for flowers next year? — J. Hammond, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

A This yellow-lantern flowered clematis ought to have been in bloom from June until the frosts. Unwins' selection of *C. tangutica* 'Sunstar' will even flower in 12 weeks from seed. I suspect your plant was not given the deep, rich, planting hole which gives clematis the flying start they need. Now that it has got its roots down, it is prepared to grow, but not flower. Prune it down to 5ft-6ft, give it a lot of rich compost and, if it is not in flower by next July-August, scrap it and start again from a named clone or selected seed.

Q Three months ago I planted a maidenhair tree, *Ginkgo biloba*. It is 20in high and has a side-shoot 13in long. Should I prune it off, and when? Is it worth trying to root it? — H. Price, Duffield, Derbyshire.

A Young ginkgos have a nasty habit of bushing out low down and failing to make a decent leader. I would cut back any unusually vigorous side-shoots to a few buds. (This is called "feathering" the tree.)

Next year, when frosts are past and the tree is growing, give it a shot of high-nitrogen feed, once, to force the leading bud into action, and keep any more strong side-shoots nipped back, to force the energy upwards.

Once you have encouraged it to form a leader, it should develop the leader unassisted in future years.

This problem is not uncommon in conifers grown from cuttings; if an uncompetitive, weak sideshoot is used to make a cutting, it can fail conspicuously to develop the strong central stem needed by the tree. For these reasons, and because ginkgos are not easy to grow from cuttings, I would throw away the side-shoot.

Q My garden is small and the soil poor and stony. It desperately needs compost, but I have no room for a heap, or even a bin. Could I make satisfactory compost in black polythene bags? — J. Bourne, Saffron Walden, Essex.

A Composting in strong black bags, such as old compost sacks or even heavy-duty bin liners, is possible, but remember to poke some holes in the sides to let the air in. Plastic keeps the heap moist, which is good, but short of the oxygen needed for decomposition. Nor can you easily turn the contents of a bag to let more air in.

When dealing with small amounts of compost, it is practical and worthwhile to chop up all the waste into small pieces with secateurs. It will rot much faster, and if you add some biological compost accelerant, such as Biotal, it will work even faster. If your soil is so hungry, why not buy a small vermin-proof bin (you can get them only 30in high), so that you can put in all your kitchen waste, too? Small compost heaps become too dry to work, but small compost bins are very efficient.

- *Write to: Garden Answers, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. Enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.*

GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY

Clematis tangutica needs plenty of rich compost

WEEKEND COURSES: Walk in the Wye Valley, become a blacksmith in West Sussex, fish in Scotland or ride on Dartmoor

NEW YEAR BREAKS

Trail riding weekend, for experienced riders only, in the Brecon Beacons on January 2-4 with farmhouse accommodation: £150; **Pottery weekend** in Weobley, Herefordshire, £144. Just two of the courses with Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083)

West African Festival at the Museum of Mankind, Burlington Gardens, W1 (0171-323 8511) from today until Dec 30. Music, dance, pottery, African food and stories. Admission free.

Ski weekends in Scotland during January. From the Mercury Hotels in Aviemore or Fort William from £75 per head, half-board. Full details on Freephone 0800 700400.

Guided walks from the Rothay Garden Hotel, Grasmere, Cumbria (015394 35334). Prices, all inclusive, from £225.

Antiques for beginners; the Alexander technique. Two one-day courses on January 3 at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 55866). £24 per course.

New year retreat at Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, near Bath (01761 433709).

Multi-activity breaks in Cambridgeshire. Archery, clay pigeon shooting, go-karting, at the Haycock, Wansford, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (01780 782223). From £110 for two nights.

Organic gardening, herb gardens; food as medicine; art and medieval history; walking in the Wye Valley. A selection of the courses at Courtfield Manor, Goodrich, Herefordshire (01594 861435). Prices from £85-£100.

Egyptology. A two-day course at Burton Manor College, South Wirral (0151-336 5172). Price £98 inclusive.

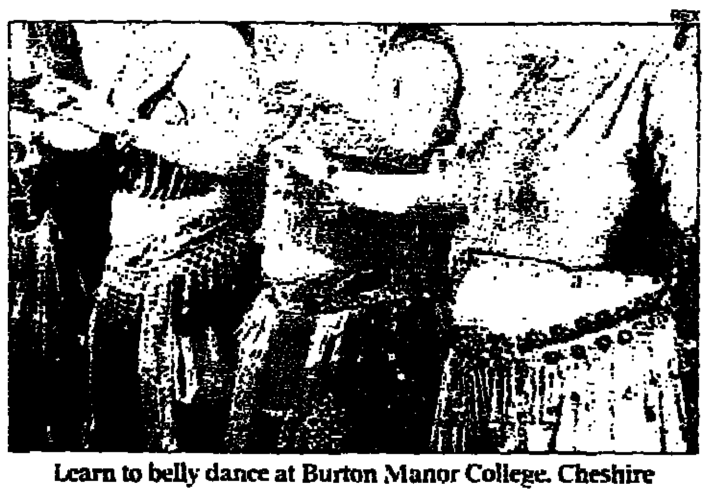
The Paston letters; writers' Venice; the art and architecture of the Islamic world. All at the University of Cambridge (01954 210636) from January 2-4. Price £120 per course, inclusive.

Cabinet making; refinishing antique furniture, basic blacksmithing. All on January 2-4 at West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £97.

Calling all pianists; boxes and gifts in fabric. At Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). Price £89.

Learn to be lord of the dance

REX



Learn to belly dance at Burton Manor College, Cheshire

JANUARY 9-11

A day at the Wells. A visit to Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Plus antique shops and stately homes from the Hotel du Vin & Bistro, Tunbridge Wells (01892 526455). Weekend rates from £69 per night.

Belly dancing. Learn the basics on a weekend course at Burton Manor College, South Wirral, Cheshire (0151-336 5172). All inclusive, £98.

Barber shop singing; winter landscape painting; France and England, a love-hate relationship. Courses available this weekend at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Prices from £159.

Writing romantic fiction; Chinese brushwork; this weekend at Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 52427). From £110.

Time travelling in the West Country; confidence building for women: This weekend at Higham Hall, Bassenthwaite Lake, Cockermouth, Cumbria (017687 76276). Price from £112.

Exploring Spain; computing skills; reflexology. All this weekend at Hill Residential Centre, Abergavenny, South Wales (01495 333777). From £88, inclusive.

Get fit for the new year; calming techniques and alternative therapies. All this weekend at Lancashire College, Chorley, Lancashire (01257 260909). £95 per course.

An Italian weekend; the ritual year; ancient Egyptian painting. Four courses this weekend at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £120.

The early 19th-century great house. At the University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education, Rewley House, Oxford (01865 270360). Price £64.

The Holy Land and the Old Testament; literature on Venice; America in the 1960s. At Wansfell College, Theydon Bois, Essex (01882 813027). Price £85.

JANUARY 16-18

Salmon fishing on the River Tay. From the Ballathie Hotel, Kinclaven, Perthshire (01250 883268). Gillie and boat provided. Half-board from £80.

Winter survival weekend in the Brecon Breacons. Two nights, equipment and instruction provided: £110. With Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083).

Flying weekend break. Win your wings in a Tomahawk aircraft on a weekend at the Angel Hotel, Midhurst, West Sussex (01730 812421). Flights also available in a hot-air balloon or a microlight. Prices from £135 per night, including one-hour flight.

Weekend walking or riding on Dartmoor. From Lewtrenchard Manor Hotel, Lewdown, near Okehampton, Devon (01566 783256). Prices from £105-£145.

Northamptonshire — birthplace of the USA; recorder players weekend; lace. Three varied weekend courses at Knuston Hall, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). Price per course £89, inclusive.

Computers without consternation; texture in landscape; how to be a freelance writer. All this weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). Price, residential, from £114.

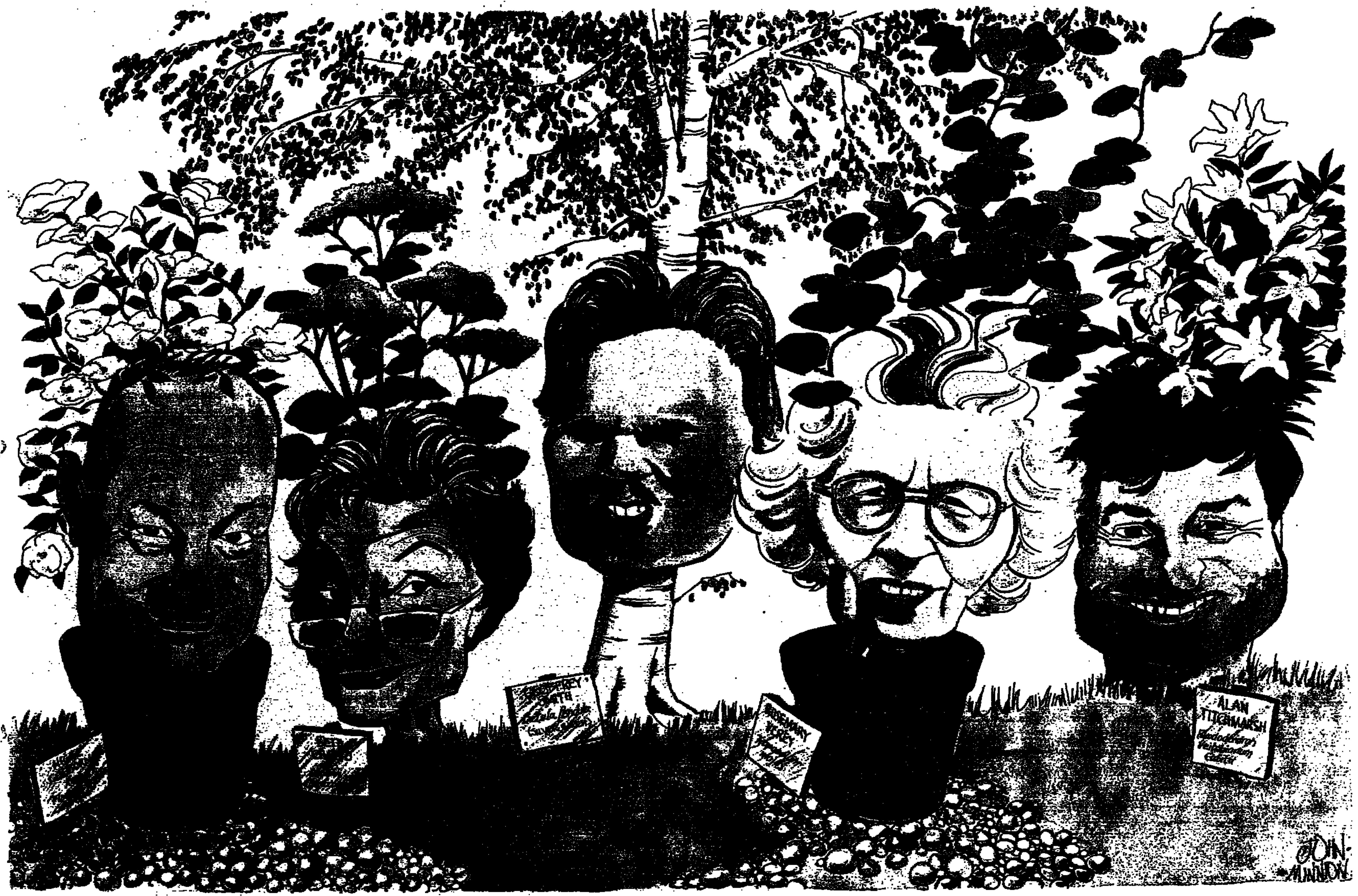
ROBIN NEILLANDS

TONY STONE

Enjoy the West African Festival at the Museum of Mankind in London from today

هكذا من الأصل

The best thing I've seen all year



Even established gardeners make new discoveries. Celebrities tell **Stephen Anderton** of some surprising finds they made in 1997

Ask anyone for their memories of their favourite plants and people, and you'll find they are always interlocked with a certain place and time. As the year comes to a close, I asked some luminaries of the gardening world with which plant they had had a memorable encounter in 1997. I wanted to know which plants gave them great pleasure, and which offered great value for space this year.

Rosemary Verey is known across the world for her garden at Barnsley House in Gloucestershire, and for her collaboration with the Prince of Wales on the garden at Highgrove. Without hesitation, she told me that her plant of 1997 was a smart new nasturtium, 'Red Wonder'. It pleased me to see someone putting in a good word for a variety of this old cottage-garden favourite, *Tropaeolum majus*.

Mrs Verey said: "I bought four plants of this annual nasturtium at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1996. They are a real wonder — everyone wanted one — so we propagated them from soft cuttings on the mist bench where they rooted within days. The leaves are a rich green with an overtone of crimson matching the luscious, deep red flowers.

"The plant makes a compact mound about 35cm square, with masses of flowers, some hiding in the foliage, some standing well above it. It succumbs to the slightest frost, and I am not sure if seedlings will come true, but at least our cuttings are safe."

Some good lessons there. Even "annual" nasturtiums, such as the double 'Hermine Grashoff', can be kept going from year to year by means of cuttings under cool glass. And an ill-bred nasturtium is one which hides its flowers in the foliage until they almost disappear. They should be avoided.

Gardening guru **Alan Titchmarsh** remembers 1997 by a rhododendron new to him, the tender *Rhododendron veitchianum* 'Cubittii', bought from that excellent nursery for fruit and conservatory plants, Reads, of Hales Hall, Loddon, in Norfolk.

"It's a tender species from Burma, most commonly grown as a pot plant for a cool conservatory. In Britain it produces long, white, scented trumpets in late winter and early spring," he said. In the wild it tends to be epiphytic, planting itself in the forks or stumps of other trees, and it has a "slightly gawky habit", made up for, in Mr Titchmarsh's eyes, by the perfume and the attractive peeling bark. With a little care it can be persuaded into a more satisfying shape.

STEPHEN ANDERTON
Heliopsis
Somm

Beth Chatto is known for her understanding of plants, and especially herbaceous perennials. In summer, Dutch tourists come to her Colchester nursery in droves, intent on serious buying and revering it as a kind of horticultural Harrods. For her, 1997 was a shining year for *Sedum* 'Matrona', which simply ignored the drought in her gravel garden and grew well.

"I brought 'Matrona' home from Ewald Hugin of Freiburg," she said. "He selected it in his nursery as an outstanding seedling and from spring to winter it catches the eye. Stout stems clothed in large, fleshy, purple-tinted leaves carry wide heads of dusky rose-pink, starry flowers in late summer. It's still good in winter, when the seedheads turn coffee brown. I grow it with *Allium hollandicum* because it is good for covering the bare space when the alliums have faded. It has a lovely texture contrast with woolly grey foliage too."

The gardening broadcaster and writer **Nigel Colborn** put a rose at the top of his list for 1997, the low-mounding 'Flower Carpet White'. "It is such a good rose — masses of flowers all season long, and they are gently scented," he said. "I grew two in big tubs, fed and watered them regularly, and they did marvellously. The foliage stayed perfectly green and glossy, with no signs of disease. I even strapped mildewed and rusty leaves to its sister variety, 'Flower Carpet Pink', but it resisted all infection."

You cannot get a better recommendation than that. It is a cracking rose. Pity about the miserable name.

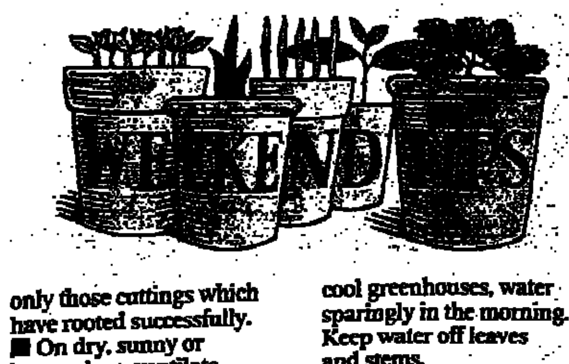
Plantsman **Roy Lancaster** is known for his plant-hunting expeditions across the world. Fresh back from the rainforests and moors of Patagonia, he was keen to recommend a lush evergreen groundcover, *Reineckia carnea*. (Remember "wry-neckia" if the name won't stick.) "It grows in sun or shade and in any soil, and has pale pink, starry flower spikes from late summer into autumn. It is easy to grow and propagate and it looks good all year round," he said. (There speaks the plantsman.)

Geoffrey Smith, of *Gardeners' Question Time*, is one of the kindest men I know. Without hesitation, his candidate for plant of 1997 (and perhaps every year) was a good old silver birch, *Betula pendula*. He planted one as a seedling 25 years ago, and it is now his grandfatherly pride and joy.

"There is nothing more elegantly beautiful in winter than the proper silver birch with its white stems and weeping branches," he said. "In spring it's plum-purple in bud, then a haze of pale green as the buds open, and a rich green in summer, but never heavy. And then in autumn it's a gorgeous yellow. It's a plant that simply can't be beaten."

But can I follow it? Well, I will choose *Heliopsis* 'Sommersonne' ('Summer Sun') for 1997. What generosity this easy perennial has. By June in my garden it was opening its first chrome-yellow 3in daisies on unsupported 30-40in stems, and it never stopped until November. Even now, in December, its skeleton stems still stand bolt upright.

In July through to October it made a glowing partnership with bright orange *Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch', planted out in mid-June. But the real miracle was that, in my rarely rained-upon garden in north Essex, the first flowers to open in June started to look shabby only in October. There was no need for any deadheading at all until the last few weeks of the season. All I had to do was enjoy the show. Like Wordsworth, but more cheerful.



- Make 12in hardwood cuttings of roses, setting them two-thirds under the soil in a trench in a shady place. By February, the bottom of the cuttings should have callused and white roots should be starting to appear. The cuttings can then be moved or transplanted to their final positions next autumn. To save space, the cuttings may spend the winter in the trench in tight bundles of one variety. Open up the bundles in spring and line out for growing on only those cuttings which have rooted successfully.
- On dry, sunny or breezy days, ventilate greenhouses as much as outdoor temperatures will allow, to reduce the onset of fungal diseases. In cold or cool greenhouses, water sparingly in the morning. Keep water off leaves and stems.
- Prune gooseberries and black, red and white currants, according to their different requirements.
- Check over shears, lawn mowers and power equipment, and get any servicing or sharpening done before the spring rush. Start up petrol engines periodically through the winter, and run them for a few minutes.
- Place seed orders, checking first what seed you have left from last year; most seeds will still germinate well enough after 12 months. Resolve not to buy seed of vegetables which crop just as you go away on summer holiday.

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'I doubt whether it is possible to send the traditional 12 gifts of Christmas as laid down in the carol without breaking the law'

Gold rings? Best in bulls' noses

DOWN TO **EARTH**

PAUL HEINEY

It is *the third* day of Christmas. I expect to be shortly in receipt of three French hens, thanks to my True Love who has already shelled out for two turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree.

So far, it has not been easy. When my True Love first announced that she was going to send me a different present every day. I was at first elated: but as I thought more about *it and how* regulation-bound life is becoming in the countryside. a *mighty* dread filled my troubled mind. I seriously doubt whether it is still possible to send the traditional 12 gifts of Christmas as laid down in the carol, without causing offence or breaking the law.

Let us take the partridge in the pear tree. The pear tree seems risk-free, but the partridge came with a note warning me *that* asking a *partridge* to sit in a tree for 12 days was a serious infringement of its liberty. If I insisted, then I may be required to prove the bird was offered counselling before being released. So I sent it back.

Then came two turtle doves. Alas, my *true* love had gone about this in a slapdash way and failed to determine the sex of each before buying them. Unnerved by the note which came with the partridge, I now fear that if they both *turn out to be of the same sex, while* being heterosexually inclined, it could amount to cruelty and bring the demonstrators round. There was also cross-infection to think of with the droppings of that mangy old partridge still adhering to that tree. They would all have to be tested by the Ministry of Agriculture. Best lose the turtle doves too.

Instead of the three French hens, a note of apology. It was from a chicken supplier just outside Calais who was so incensed by Dr Cunningham's proposed ban on the import of French beef into Britain that he told me he would die before selling so much as a single French *hen to my True Love, let alone three.*

I was dreading the four calling birds. There has been a spate of cases recently where incomers into rural areas have successfully gone to court in order to *silence neighbouring* cockerels. However, I was somewhat relieved to discover that, according to *The New Oxford Books of Carols*, the original uses the word "cally-birds". Imagine my *distress* on reading the footnote *to discover that* cally birds are blackbirds. You'll spend less time in jail for walking into a bank with a balaclava over your head than for trying to capture a songbird. *Roll on day five.*

Gold rings? Only one use for those, and that's putting them through the noses of bulls. Have they outlawed that yet? *If* anyone objects, there will be no *point telling them* that the ring is the only way a farmer can control a ton of snorting beef on the bone. But if there is the slightest hint that the bull isn't happy with it, rings through noses will be as much a thing of the past as oxtail soup. Better not to be caught in possession of gold rings.

Now I'm getting angry. She sends me six geese a laying! Salmonella tested? I bet not. *She wouldn't think of that. For all* she cares, I could pass on one of those foul, infected eggs to a passing pensioner or pregnant *lady and be sued for every* penny I've got.

*And she can forget the seven swans a-*swimming. Apart from having to provide a qualified life-saver while swimming is taking place, does she not know that all swans are the property of the Queen?

Eight maids a milking! Now, here she has got it dead right. *We need* more young people in proper employment. I *shall welcome the* milkmaids. The nine ladies dancing can go *elsewhere, frankly. Strippagrams* may be fine for William Hague, but some of us round here have a sense of dignity. As for the ten lords a-leaping, I do not expect they will turn up. Mr Blair will have got rid of them.

And if anyone thinks I am fooled by the *11 pipers piping, think again.* This is clearly a cover for a gathering of soon-to-be-redundant hunting-horn blowers. Once public opinion puts an end to their sport, this is just the kind of trick they will get up to — dressing up as pipers.

The same goes for the 12 drummers drumming. These are no *doubt* dispossessed military bandsmen turned on the streets by the Ministry *of Defence. We do* not like the MoD's leavings round here. Not only *did they make a mess* of Orford Ness before flogging it to the National Trust, *they have now pulled* out of an air base leaving dereliction and confusion. Bang *your drums* elsewhere, boys.

All of which leaves me with eight *milkmaids*, various diseased birds and a pear tree. I have received notification that if the milkmaids intend to practise their skills and as a result produce unpasteurised milk, the Government intends to ban it in the *new year. No* matter that it does less harm to drinkers than the *treated stuff. I am now* down to the pear tree. Attached to this is a label. It *reads: "This tree will produce fruit which* may be hard before it ripens. This fruit may fall and could injure persons below. Protective headgear is advised at all times." Happy new year.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

The leaders of the sled pack

Sally Jones discovers the exhilaration of riding through snow with a team of Siberian huskies

SIMON PRICE

Helen and Shango are pack leaders in a team of six. They love racing so much they scream to be off, and can cover 20 miles in two hours

John Coyne and his huskies. "An outing is a privilege"

Shango, the huge, wolfish lead husky, bounces oft into the air on straight legs, and bays. It is a spine-tingling yell *of delight at the outing* in prospect. The rest of the eight-dog team harnessed in pairs respond as John Coyne, their musher, unfastens the line anchoring the racing sled to his van and pulls the snow hooks from the frozen ground.

All six dogs hurl themselves *forward. The sled spurts* forward over the first snow along an icicle-hung forest path of Christmas-card prettiness.

For the soft-spoken Mr Coyne, this is a lifetime's obsession. A former American *diplomat and Cambridge* resource economy don, he now farms sheep and barley near Aberdeen. He is also head of Britain's Sled Dog Sport Federation, which is lobbying to have the sport accepted as an Olympic event.

Mr Coyne was one of the *pioneers of sled-dog racing in* Britain, which during the past 20 years has grown to a minority cult, with more than 500 teams training and competing regularly, mainly on wheeled rigs because of the shortage of snow.

He lives with his wife, Kari, *in a 16th-century* castle *near* Aberdeen. He admits it is his passion for the huskies, rather than the sport's backwoods he-man appeal, that fascinates him. In his twenties, he trained his highly intelligent pet husky to run with him while he was skiing.

When he settled in Scotland nearly 20 years ago, Mr Coyne *acquired three huskies and* began harnessing them to race — so successfully that his team often beat the amateurish four-dog outfits then competing in British events.

"I'd always been interested *in primitive Siberian huskies,*" he says, "and started importing *Seppala* dogs, *which* are developed from huskies bred by the Chuchi Indians in Siberia for their power and endurance. The skill is to pick a team of personalities which complement one another."

He trains 20 dogs and builds up their stamina over far longer runs than the typical distance of three to five *miles, often covering more* than 20 miles in two hours.

Training the new litters starts when the pups are about four weeks old. Mr Coyne walks the mothers and the pups follow. Over several *months, the walk becomes a* run and, once the dogs can outpace him. Mr Coyne harnesses them to his waist and runs behind, teaching them the commands: "Gee!" (turn right) and "Haw!" (turn left). Then comes the outing with a sled.

"I *make the light racing* sleds out of ash planks," he says. "It's difficult to halt the dogs in full cry and I use my heels. I've had one or two prangs when the dogs have bolted after deer, but it's part *of the pack-hunting instinct* that also makes them run well."

The sport demands high levels of fitness from the mushers as well as the dogs, and Mr Coyne usually runs alongside the sled during uphill sections to reduce the load. During downhill runs, the team can reach 25mph, so any musher not acting as passenger would soon be left behind.

I reluctantly agreed to an outing aboard Mr Coyne's sled. Sitting bolt upright on the planks, I braced myself as *he released the sled* amid a chorus of screams. At once, *hundreds of pine* trunks and snow-covered bushes skimmed past us as though on a rapid conveyor belt. The sled crackled, rocking across *glassy puddles and rutted ice.* I held on for dear life while Mr Coyne sang out the commands that sent the team winding as one dog down the forest trails.

The first moment of stark terror came when they essayed a sharp left turn. With the sled bucking like a mustang, I shut my eyes, waiting for the inevitable encounter with a tree trunk. It never materialised. *Mr Coyne guided us back on* to the trail, reassuring the startled huskies, who resumed the powerful lope that made an hour-long outing seem more like a 20-minute gallop.

"I enjoy racing," Mr Coyne says, "but the real joy is to work towards running together in harmony. When they have a great outing, sharing it is the greatest privilege in the world."

● *For further information on husky racing, contact Eileen Little (0171-728 1493 or 0850 692896).*

HUSKY FACT FILE

DO HUSKIES make good pets? No, is the answer, *Verite Reily Collins writes.* Huskies are pack animals and prefer animal companionship. They also love a fight. Husky heaven is sleeping on ground in minus 20C, so *they are not really suited to Britain's coldish winters and* warm summers. They are even less suited to indoor life. Many adult huskies are abandoned because they aren't happy indoors. Husky dog-racers are constantly being phoned by police forces who have found yet another abandoned dog that needs adopting.

Huskies chase anything, and a husky with no exercise is a destructive animal. Huskies are also bad *in* cities, as they have no road sense. However, harnessed up, they will pull a sled for up to 100 miles in a day.

If no amount of advice will deter you from owning one — or a few, seeing as they are pack animals — advice *can be sought from the Siberian Husky Club of* Great Britain. Send a large sae to 3 High Street, Lamport, Northamptonshire NN6 9HB.

Sauce for the goose, if you eat it all yourself

FEATHER REPORT

I KNOW an official of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds who once spent a *holiday in a small hotel in* Scotland. At breakfast one morning, the proprietress leant over and whispered in his ear: "Special treat for dinner tonight. Wild goose!" *The proprietress did not know* what his job was, and he pondered on his dilemma for a while. Should he report her, or *should he settle for his dinner?* He wisely decided on the *dinner — and very good it* was, he told me.

The fact is that you can shoot wild geese only for your own consumption. You cannot sell them. Wildfowlers can go out and lie in wait for the skeins as they fly in from the sea to the fields on a winter *dawn, but they can only take* the bag home for their own pot. Brent and bean geese cannot be shot at all.

By the end of this month, there will be hundreds of thousands of wild geese wintering around our coasts. Up in the Wash, there are already 75,000 pink-footed geese. They roost out on the intertidal *mudflats, or just swim the* night away in the water, and they pour into the Norfolk farmland as the sun rises.

THE FARMERS do not mind because the geese mostly eat the rejected sugar-beet tops in the fields, and their droppings *fertilise the soil. Even if they* eat the young shoots of winter wheat it does not matter because the plants grow stronger for it. They are a wonder*ful sight as they sweep in,* filling the air with their strange cackles and cries. There are also enormous flocks of wintering pinkfeet in the south and east of Scotland. You can come across them in the vast, *lonely fields* bordering the Firth of Forth, and they *rise in baying clouds.* These birds have taken recently to roosting on the large lochs.

The pinkfeet come here from their breeding sites in Iceland, while the white-fronted geese — the other species that winters here in large numbers — come either from Greenland or the far north of Europe. One of the best places to see whitefronts is on the Severn *estuary, particularly at the* Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust reserve at Slimbridge. From the Slimbridge hides you can usually watch a flock moving steadily across a field, all of *them munching as they go.*

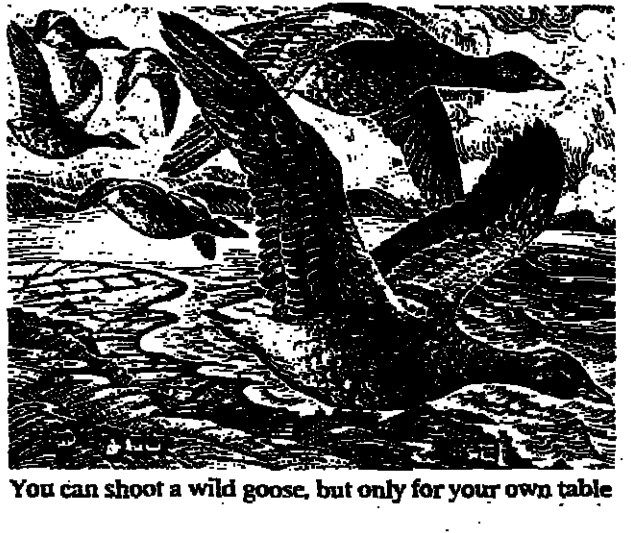
The largest concentrations of wintering white-fronted geese are found, however, on the lakes abutting the reclaimed land in Holland. Whitefronts have a musical, laughing honk, and along that stretch of the Dutch coast the *sky rings all day with their* evocative calls, as the geese go over in V-shaped flocks or in long, trailing lines... Some of those birds will come to Britain after Christmas if the weather on the continent turns really hard.

Meanwhile, for the new year you can go out and buy a farmyard goose — but if you *want to have a plump, succulent* wild goose, you must shoot it yourself.

DERWENT MAY

● **What's about:** *Birders — Watch for water rails around well-vegetated margins of lakes. Twitchers — Bonaparte's gull, Falmouth, Cornwall: ferruginous duck, Cley, Norfolk: blue-winged teal, Stiffkey Fen, Norfolk. Details from Birdline 0891 700222. Calls cost 50p a minute.*

PETER BROWN



You can shoot a wild goose, but only for your own table

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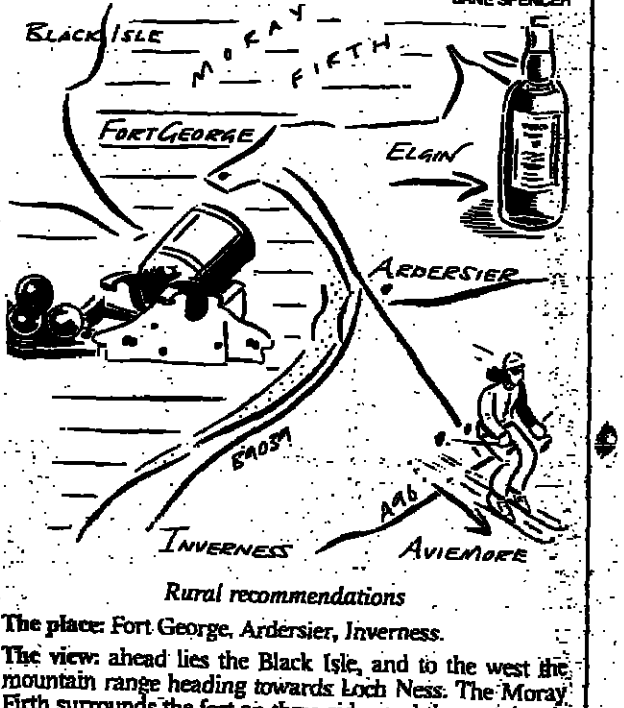
ON THE SPOT: MORAY FIRTH

JANE SPENCER



Rural recommendations

The place: Fort George, Ardersier, *Inverness.*

The view: ahead lies the Black Isle, and to the west the *mountain range heading towards* Loch Ness. The Moray Firth surrounds the fort on three sides and the sea view is extensive.

Aficionados: families and tourists.

Historic interest: this is one of the most outstanding artillery fortifications in Europe, and was built after the Jacobite *uprising of 1745*, which threatened the Hanoverian rule of the Highlands. It covers more than 40 acres, and Edinburgh Castle would *fit into its parade* ground alone. The fort took 21 years to complete and was the largest construction ever undertaken in the Highlands.

Time to visit: Open all year. Special events arranged for January 1-2.

How to get there: from Inverness, take the A96, then the B9039.

OS ref: 761/567 on sheet 27.

Also nearby: Aviemore ski resort and the whisky distilleries near Elgin.

DEBORAH KING

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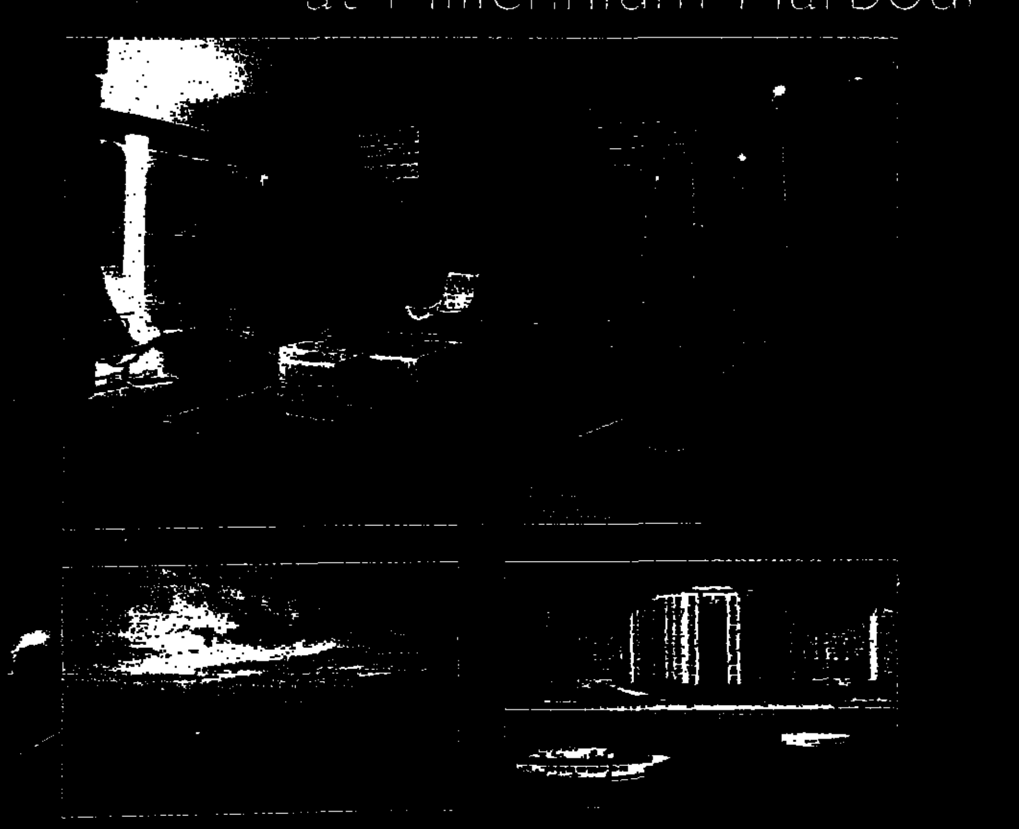

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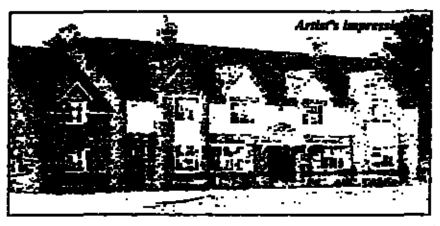

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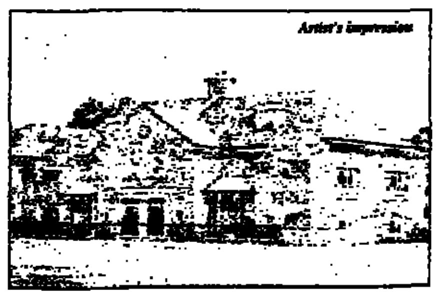
Artist's impression



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Guy Walters stumbles on a charming cottage with a bathroom made for browsers and a name always guaranteed to amuse

Faccombe Cottage

The "sweet path" leading to Faccombe Cottage's front door

Sleepy bolthole among the apple trees

MARTIN BEDDALL

Designer Caroline Charles in the sitting room, where her husband Malcolm Valentine demonstrates its relaxing properties while he catches up on his reading

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

More than ten years ago, Paul Foster became the proprietor of the Jack Russell Inn in Faccombe, Hampshire. So delighted was Mr Foster that he threw a party for the locals.

Some 100 gallons of bitter and 88 gallons of lager later, the Jack Russell was drunk dry, and Mr Foster even ran out of glasses: 188 gallons is 1,504 pints. He must have got Faccombe plastered.

Faccombe is the type of place that boasts the standard sleepiness and *the usual cosiness of villages that* are just over an hour from London down the M3 or the M4.

Pretty church, pretty houses, pretty awful roads. Its name, if pronounced correctly, sounds like a taxi driver swearing.

Caroline Charles, the dress designer, is selling Faccombe Cottage. Like the rest of the village, Faccombe Cottage is cosy and sleepy, and if it had its own road, it *would be charmingly potholed.*

There is little hint here of the woman who has three London boutiques. Of the Caroline Charles who made clothes for the Beatles, *for Emma Thompson or for Diana,* Princess of Wales. She was the designer who starred in Piers Paul Read's novel *A Season in the West,* which begins with a woman discovering that *her husband has bought* a Caroline Charles dress. The woman is thrilled, believing the dress to be for her birthday but it fails to materialise and she mistakenly believes *he is having an affair.* When the dress is finally produced at Christmas it is too late — she has embarked on her own retaliatory fling and the dress becomes a *mockery of the tattered marriage.*

Sunlight floods through a bedroom window to cast a warm glow

By the time she was 22, Miss Charles was providing "off-beat" wardrobes for the likes of Rudolf Nureyev, David Frost and Mick *Jagger. She dressed the heroines of* the pop generation in the 1960s — Cilla Black, Lulu, Petula Clark, Dionne Warwick and Barbra Streisand — after she set up on her *own on leaving Mary Quant. She* was the envy of every girl when she dressed Ringo Starr in his wedding suit. Yet her rural retreat is everybody's notion of a middle-class weekender's cottage in the country — a combination of Beatrix Potter and Anne Hathaway. "It has a predicably sweet path down to the front door lined by apple trees which need occasional pruning," she explains.

A small, pretty garden means minimal maintenance. Pruning the apple trees is a therapy, attending *to the climbers and the beds a* relaxation, not graft. For relaxation is what this bolthole is about. Caroline Charles hates the glare of publicity — she won't talk about her *clients or even her dressmaking.* She once described the experience of going down a catwalk after one of her shows as terrifying: "It's like jumping into a cold swimming *pool."*

However, she cannot quite leave the dressmaking behind. She *has decided to sell the* cottage because she needs more work space. "I work all the time," she says, "even at weekends. I need a separate room."

She bought her cottage about 12 years ago. "I saw it on Monday, went to Japan the following day and asked my lawyer to arrange things when I was away. When I got back it was all done."

The cottage dates from about 1850, although she has added an extension that has given her a second bathroom and a larger kitchen. That second bathroom has a beautiful view of the valley. In fact, one could sit on the lavatory for ages and gaze at it.

The kitchen is functional and unremarkable, except for the casually colourful Chinese slate that Ms Charles put down.

All over the cottage, there are hints of the Orient. In the downstairs lavatory, there are scores of *postcards of Japanese watercolours* neatly assembled in clip frames.

The sitting room is cosy. A wood fire, a bay window that feels like it was stolen from an Edwardian *cruise ship, bookshelves and a big* central beam provide the ideal backdrop to watch an afternoon's racing from Sandown with a cat on your lap and a book in which you *have started the same paragraph* eight times.

Less snug — because it is brighter and bigger — is the dining room, between the kitchen and *sitting room which has French* doors leading to a patio.

The main bedroom is large enough and at the top of the stairs, there are two twin bedrooms, but *they are not hotel-like, as the word* "twin" suggests. Instead, they are country cottage cute, without being twee. A fine balance, easily accomplished by a designer in her mid-*fifties whose shop in Bond Street* sits alongside Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent, Lagerfeld and Versace.

No doubt potential buyers may be put off by the pub. A noisy pub has ruined many a quiet weekend, and broken glasses have gashed many a canine paw.

I didn't look very hard, but I neither saw nor heard the pub. Perhaps the Jack Russell Inn has been put down.

● *Faccombe Cottage is on sale at £275,000 through Knight Frank in Hungerford (01488 682726).*

Time for a good book: a *bathroom worth lingering in*

MARKET COMMENT

THE DAYS are long gone since Britain's estates, large or small, relied on massed manpower to run them, but several factors work against the selling-off of the cottages and farms built for estate workers.

Landowners are keen to uphold the integrity of the core estate, because its value as a whole amounts to more than the sum of its parts. And they want to retain their privacy and seclusion; the lodge or gardener's cottage *would be kept for staff, and long-standing* retainers are often granted security of tenure for the rest of their lives on retirement.

But outlying properties that are no longer occupied by estate staff may either be let out commercially or sold. Letting is an attractive option for landlords, says Clive Hopkins of Knight Frank's estates department, with cottage rents standing at between £500 and £1,200 a month. He cites the 22 cottages making up part of the Hackwood estate currently on the market with Knight Frank.

EDIFICE

Cottages can be rented for £500-£1,200

Sales of chunks of property within the main estate are often subject to a number of conditions, geared to the maintenance of the estate's atmosphere and daily life. For example, purchasers may not be allowed to keep dogs; the landowner may retain access to the land; there may be restrictions on tree-felling or additional building; there may be stipulations about decoration. *In some cases,* even children may be frowned upon.

THE FLIP SIDE is an address with country cachet and a life in the heart of rural Britain. As Dawn Carrott at Jackson Stops & Staff points out: "You're buying a lifestyle; if you *can't live with a drive down a long bumpy* track, then it may not be for you."

The sale of entire estates is relatively rare; the land and buildings are usually broken up into a number of lots. "The buyer will have the say of whether he wants the outlying lots or not," says Mr Hopkins. "If he doesn't, we'll sell them off separately."

Prices are dependent on location, but cottages can range from £100,000 to £350,000.

FAITH GLASGOW

DREAM HOMES IN HAMPSHIRE

■ THE Paymaster General, **Geoffrey Robinson** MP, owns a Grade I listed mansion in *Hampshire in* 47 acres on the banks of the River Test (right). Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, Mr Robinson bought the 20-*bedroom property in 1994* for £800,000. The house also has gardens designed by Gertrude Jekyll, four cottages, a chapel and a swimming pool.

■ THE composer **Andrew Lloyd Webber** bought Sydmonton Court overlooking Watership Down, *Hampshire (left), in 1973* for £150,000. The Grade II listed Victorian country house, in 4,500 acres, has an equestrian centre and is home to his collection of pre-Raphaelite *and Picasso art.* He also has homes in New York, Ireland and France.

■ THE television presenter **Esther Rantzen** and her husband, the *producer* **Desmond Wilcox**, divide their time between their house in Hampstead, north London, and a six-bedroom farmhouse in the New Forest, Hampshire (right). *Dating back to 1680, the* modernised farmhouse is set in two acres of gardens and has a swimming pool.

HOME SWAP FESTIVE QUIZ

Champagne
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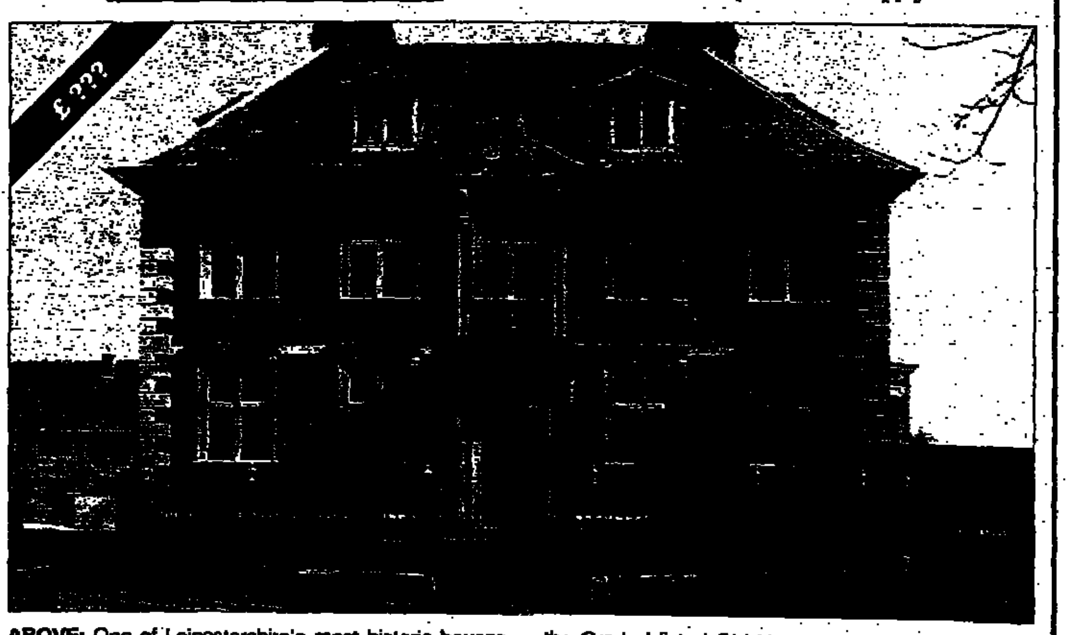
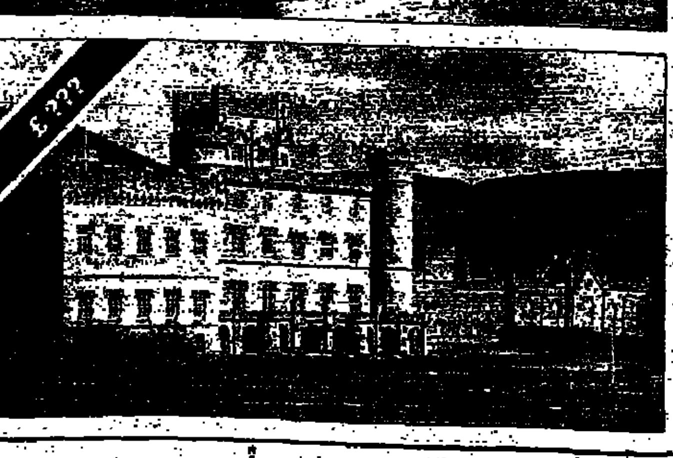
Win a jeroboam of Moët & Chandon champagne by naming the asking price (not sale price) of these houses, on sale in 1997. Answers by Jan 6 to Home Swap Festive Quiz, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. *Times* competition rules apply



ABOVE: One of Leicestershire's most historic houses — the Grade I listed Old House, at Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire — is a fine example of the Renaissance house. It drew serious bidders *when it came up for sale in the* spring. It has nine bedrooms and three reception rooms, a beamed kitchen with an original flagstone floor, and just under an acre of walled formal gardens.

ABOVE: The proposed sale of Luton Hoo, with its Mansion House by Sir Robert Adam and parkland by Capability Brown, created a stir in September. The 1,545-acre estate is 32 miles from London.



RIGHT: One of the bedrooms in Taymouth Castle is decorated in Queen Victoria's honour, and the estate, with 450 acres, is thought to *have inspired her to build Balmoral.* In fact, the castle stood in for Balmoral in the film *Mrs Brown.*

CHERYL TAYLOR

هكذا من الأصل

ANGUS MEWSE

Lois Letts on the problems of moving house at this time of year

A moving time at Christmas

Who moves home over the Christmas period? Would anyone go out of their way to combine two of the most stressful events known to man (and woman)?

The answer is yes, a surprisingly large number of people. Linda Schofield, marketing manager for Pickfords, calls December one of the peak moving times for families. "Children finish the school term, and parents want them settled into their new home, with stockings hung on the fireplace, by the time Father Christmas comes calling. We're working flat out up until Christmas Eve, and we're back into action after Boxing Day."

Young professionals, reluctant to take days off in January, use the office break to move. Employees in industry, too, have a compulsory ten-day break. Others fall into the "reluctant mover" category, those at the top of chains who are being pressurised to leave. No one wants to be homeless for Christmas, or to face the prospect of six months in rented accommodation, the modern equivalent of a night in the stable.

The challenges of a move over the Christmas period should be borne in mind well in advance. Daylight will be fading by 4pm, so stumbling across ill-lit lawns with antique furniture can be hazardous. Colds and the office party season will slow down office workers, so conveyancing and reconnection of electricity might take longer than normal.

Transport in the country should be appropriate to the terrain. Every year, farmers do a roaring trade hiring out tractors and Land Rovers to lift removal vans out of muddy ditches.

When you reach your new home, go easy on yourself. According to a survey by Pickfords on the emotional side of moving house, three-quarters of women, and nearly half of men, believe their house has a "personality", and are upset about leaving it. At this nostalgic time of year, house movers will be more tearful than ever.

Josie Ray overcame considerable challenges to have a successful Christmas in 1989. She was leaving a cottage in Herefordshire for a farmhouse in the same county, nestling in the shadow of the Black Mountains. "My husband had been ill with a collapsed lung and flu. He was unfit to work and we thought we might as well move while he was recovering. The vendors accepted a low offer because they wanted the money by Christmas."

But her husband's ill-health was not all she had to contend with. "The conveyancing was quite complicated because chunks of farmland had been sold off. Our solicitor was in bed with a temperature, so to get things completed in time I went around to his office and did a lot of the paperwork myself with his secretary."

Then there was the unpredictable British weather. "The weather had been good, but on the morning of the move, December 19, we woke up to find it was snowing heavily. Our next-door neighbour was being buried on the same day. We had to load in front of the mourners, and then the removal van got stuck behind the hearse."

Arriving at the other end, several hours behind schedule, they found there was no central heating. "But we got the fires going with logs which we'd brought with us. That evening we put our coats on and headed to the pub."

The secret is in not expecting too much of yourself as a hostess. Visiting relations on Christmas Day is often the answer for exhausted mothers. Dora Birckett intends to visit a sister this year, after taking the best part of a year to sell a farmhouse in Wales.

"Our first buyer withdrew at the last moment after spending £7,000 on surveys," she says. "I had packed our furniture and left it stored in a container on a field. It is still there — nine months and two buyers later. Plastic garden chairs are all we have to sit on."

SMOOTH OPERATING

BOOK a removal company the moment you know you are moving because they get busy at this time of year. Have emergency numbers of plumbers and electricians at the ready. Something is bound to freeze.

ORGANISE electricity, water, gas and telephones as soon as possible, and lighting at the other end. Daylight will have faded by 4pm. Ask the people who are moving out to leave the central heating on.

ENSURE that the access road is free of obstacles. They will be difficult to spot in the dark. Keep children out of the way by sending them to grandparents. If you must have them, keep them busy.

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Church services for tomorrow

ARMAGH CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 M. The Angel Gabriel (Basque Carol); 3.15 E.
BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 Cymun Bendigaid; 11 Euch; 5 Gosber.
BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 Euch; 3.30 EP.
BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Stanford in C; 4 Ch E.
BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 M; 10.30 Euch. Canon Galilee; 4 Ch E.
BRECON CATHEDRAL: 8, 11 Euch; 3.30 Service of Nine Lessons with Carols.
BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10 Euch; 3.30 Ch E. Harris in A. The Dean.
CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 M; 11 S Euch; 3.15 E; 6.30 Carol Service.
CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 8 HC; *10.30 S Euch. Canon C Hill; 3 EP.*
CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 9.30, 11.15 Euch; 6 E.
CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 Euch; 11.30 MP. Canon M Rees; 3.30 EP; 6.30 ES.
CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M. Stanford in B flat. 11 S Euch; 3.30 E.
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 11 Euch.
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 S Euch; 6 E.
CORK CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch; 11.15 S Euch; 7 EP.
COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 C; 10.30 Euch; 3 Polish Lutherans; 5 Ch E.
DERBY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.45 S Euch, Canon G Marshall; 6 Carol Service.
DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M. Canon S Pedley; 11.15 HC; 3.30 E.
ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC; 10.30 S *Euch; 3.45 Readings & Carols.*
EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S *Euch; 11.15 M; 3 E. Brewer in D.*
GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; *10.15 Euch.* 12.15 HC; 3 E. Stanford in C.
GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch; 11.30 M; 6.30 E with Carols.
HEREFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; 10 Euch; 3.30 E with Carols.
LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 Euch. Sumsion in F; 4 EP.
LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 MS; 10.30 Ministry of Sacrament; 3.30 E.
LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7.45 L; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch; 11.15 M; 12.30 HC; 3.45 Service of 9 Lessons & Carols.
LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 8 MP & HC; *10.30 Euch; 3 Carols; 4 HC.*
LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL: 8, 9 HC; 11 S *Euch. How in D; 12.15 HC; 3.30, 6.30 E.*
MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8.45 M; *9 Euch; 10.30 Said Euch; 6.30 EP.*
NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; *9.30 S Euch. Darke in F; 6 Ch E.*
NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 *M; 6.30 S Euch.*
NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch; 3.30 Festal E and Procession. Wood in E flat.
PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 10.30 Euch. Stanford in C & F; 3.30 E.
PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 C; 6.30 E. Rev P Jones.
RIPON CATHEDRAL: 8, 9.30 Euch; *11.30 M; 12.30 Euch; 5.30 E.*
ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; *9.45 M; 10.30 S Euch. Darke in E; 3.15 E.*
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch; 11.30 M; 3 Ch E, Stanford in G.
SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 MP; 10.30 S Euch; 6.30 E & Sermon.
SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch; 11 Ch Euch, Sumsion in F; 3 Ch E.
SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 7.30 M & L; 8 HC; 9.30 C; 11 S Euch; 3.15 E.
TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 Sol S Euch; 3 Children's Carol Service; 6 E.
WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: *8 HC; 9.15* C; 11 Sol Euch. Canon R Capper; 4 E.
WELLS CATHEDRAL: *8 HC; 9.45 S* Euch; 11.30 M; 3 E.
WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC; 11.15 Euch; 2.30 E; 3 Processional Service; 6.30 ES. Canon D Gray.
WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7, 8, 9, 10.30, 12 Mass; 3.30 Sol V; 5.30, 7 Mass.

Carols at Ely Cathedral tomorrow

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 M; 11.15 S Euch; 3.30 E.
YORK MINSTER: 8, 8.45 HC; 10 S Euch; *11.30 M; 4 E.*
ST ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL, Hertfordshire: *8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11 M; 12.15 HC; 6.30 E.*
ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, Aberdeen: 8 HC; 10.15 S Euch.
ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Denbighshire: 11.30 Ch Euch.
ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL, Pembs: 7.30 *MP; 8, 9.30 HC; 11.15 Euch; 6 E.*
ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch; 11.30 HC; 3.30 E.
ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, Southwark: 11.30 Solemn Mass, Fr J E Cronin.
ST MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL, Old Aberdeen: 11 HC. Rev R Frazer.
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Glasgow: 8.30 Euch; 10 S Euch; 12 HC; 6.30 EP.
ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 8.30 Euch; 11.15 M; 12.15 Euch; 3.15 Ch E.
ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S Euch, Mass for 4 voices (Byrd); 3.15 E.
ALL SAINTS, W1: *8 LM; 10.20 MP; 11* HM; 5.15 LM; 4.30 EP.
ALL SOULS, *W1: 8 C; 9.30, 11.30 MP, Rev* R Bewes; 6.30 EP, Rev Dr J Stott.
THE ASSUMPTION, *W1: 11 MS. Missa* In Honorem Sancti Dominici (Rubbra).
CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, *SW3:* 8 HC; 10 Children's Service; 11 M; 12.15 HC; 6 E.
CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, WC2: 11.15 MS; 6.30 ES.
FARM STREET, W1: 8, 9.30 LM; 11 HM; 12.30 LM; 4.15, 6.15 LM.
HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, *SW7:* 9 C; 11 Family Service; 5, 7.30 Informal Service.
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, *SW1:* 8.45 Euch; 11 S Euch.
THE ORATORY, *SW7:* 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass; Missa O Magnum Mysterium (Victoria); 12.30 Mass; 3.30 V & B; 4.30, 7 Mass.
ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH W8: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Gizirian.
WESLEY'S CHAPEL, EC2: 9.45 HC, Rev *Dr L Griffiths; 11 MP.*
WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist): 11 MP, *Rev Dr P Graves.*
ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), Gresham St, EC2: 11 Ch Euch, Rev G Neumann; 7 Jazz Carol Service.
ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, EC1: 9 HC; 11 Ch Euch; Missa Aeterna Christi Munera (Palestrina); 6.30 Ch E.
ST BRIDE'S, *EC4: 11 Ch M & Euch,* Ireland in C, Canon J Oates; 6.30 Ch E, *Second Service (Byrd).*
ST CLEMENT DANES, WC2: 11 Ch M. Boyce in C, Rev D MacKenzie.
ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, SW1: 11; 6.30, Rev W A Cairns.
ST ETHELDREDA'S, EC1: 9 Mass; 11 S Mass, Pastores Dixite (Morales).
ST GEORGE'S, *W1: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch,* Short Service (Batten).
ST JAMES'S, Garlickhythe, EC4: *10.30 S* M, John Paul.
ST JAMES'S, W1: 9.15 Euch; 11 S Euch, Rev D Reeves; 5.45 EP.
ST JAMES'S, W2: 10.30 *S Euch, Rev A* Meldrum.
ST JOHN'S, *E15: 11 HC, Rev D Gritten;* 6.30 Christmas Prayer & Praise.
ST LUKE'S, *SW3: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Rev* C Kevill-Davies; 6.30 EP.
ST MARK'S, *NW1: 8 HC; 9.45 Family C;* 11 LM, Rev R MacLaren.
ST MARGARET'S, *SW1: 10 M, Britten in* C, Canon D Gray.
ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC; 9.45 Euch; 11.30 Visitors Service; 2.45 Chinese Service; 5 EP; 6.30 ES.
ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, W8: 9.30 Euch; 11.15 Ch M, Rev F Gelli; 6.30 E.
ST MARY'S, SW1: 9, 10 LM; 11 HM; Missa O Magnum Mysterium (Victoria); 7.15 LM.
ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN, NW3: 8 Euch; *10.30 Ch Euch; 6 Sol E.*
ST MARYLEBONE, NW1: 8 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Missa Quarti Toni (Victoria).
ST PETER'S, SW1: 8.15 HC; 10 Family Euch; 11 S Euch, Mass For 3 Voices (Byrd).
CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA, HM Tower of London: 11.30 HC with Carols in Chapel Royal.
CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Wassail Carol (Popplewell).
CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC; 11 M, Wood in E; 3.30 E, 1st Fauxbourden Service (Händl).
GROSVENOR CHAPEL, *South Audley* St, W1: 11 S Euch, Rev S J Hobbs.
THE TEMPLE CHURCH, EC4: 11.15 HC.
GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW1: 11 M, Coventry Carol, Band of the Coldstream Guards; 12 HC.
ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE CHAPEL, SE10: 11 HC, Rev R Nurton.

Faiths are like jewels and all are precious

Credo

JONATHAN SACHS

Some years ago, in the course of a television documentary, the Prince of Wales made the famous statement that he would like to become "Defender of Faith" rather than "Defender of *the* Faith." At the time, the phrase caused a flurry of controversy, but it deserves more serious reflection than it has received. How can the future head of the Church of England be a defender of other faiths which are not his own? Yet how can a future monarch *not* defend the integrity of the many faith communities that make up contemporary Britain? Is there a way through this impasse? I think there is.

Many years ago when I was a student, I met one of the great rabbis of the 20th century. At that time I was at a crossroads in my own religious development, and I asked him the following question. "I would like to become a more committed Jew. But I also value the world outside — the great music, art and literature whose inspiration is often drawn from quite un-Jewish sources. Must I make this sacrifice? Is religious commitment exclusive?"

He replied with a parable: "There were once two men who spent their lives transporting stones. One carried rocks, the other diamonds. One day they were given emeralds to carry. The man who had spent his days carrying rocks saw emeralds as just another heavy weight, a burden of no intrinsic value. The one who had carried diamonds recognised emeralds as another form of precious stone, different but with their own distinctive beauty.

"So," he explained, "it is with faith. If your own faith is nothing more than a burden, you will not value the faith of others. But if you cherish your faith, you will value other people's faith also, even though it is different from your own. You will know that faiths are like jewels. One is especially your own. But all are precious."

It was a wise answer, and I have tried to live by it ever since. Many times I have met and been moved by sincere Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. There is something unmistakable about people whose lives have been touched by the sense of mystery at the universe.

You feel it in their serenity or graciousness or inner poise. It can be a smile that gathers you into its embrace, or a laugh that lifts you above the pain and conflict of the world, or a love that surprises you by its generosity. Such people leave you feeling affirmed and enlarged.

At a level beyond words, faith sends out its light to faith. Those who recognise it in themselves can sense it in others. Just as a painter may find inspiration in the work of artists far removed in time and style from his own, so a believer can feel reinforced by the distant echoes of the divine presence in other traditions, other lives.

It does not weaken my faith to know that others find God in different ways. Instead, it strengthens my conviction that God is beyond the particularities of language, time and culture, always surprising us by being where we least expect Him to be. Far from being paradoxical, it makes a great deal of sense to say that one who defends a particular faith is best poised to defend other faiths as well.

For if we had to entrust our most cherished possession to someone else to guard, who would we choose? Someone, surely, who has treasures of his own and therefore knows the value of what he has to defend.

● *Jonathan Sachs is the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations*

Baptism by fire

Ruth Gledhill joins in a celebration of churches past

WITHIN the ancient walls of Stationers' Hall, near St Paul's in the City of London, the names of long-forgotten parishes resounded in the dimly-lit room. "St Sepulchre without Newgate," shouted the extant parish clerk of that lost church, raising his glass of port to the assembled company. "St Nicholas Acons," shouted another. "St Mildred Poultry", the clerks cheered.

The names rang out for 10 minutes or more. The men, parish clerks all, were celebrating the parishes of the City, including those where the church itself has long since disappeared. The parishes have long since been absorbed into existing churches. But clerks can still be appointed to the ancient livings. These clerks, laymen, can apply to be brethren of the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks. And this day, the feast day of St Nicholas, was the company's annual feast. It was taking place after Holy Communion at St Andrew by the Wardrobe nearby. The company's master, Oswald Clark, is parish clerk of St Andrew's.

Remaining true to an Anglican tradition that many wish could be revived, the Rev John Paul, officiating with two assistants, led us through every one of the Ten Commandments. We confessed our manifold sins and our preacher, Bishop Rowell, pronounced *absolution.*

Afterwards, we followed the Master, Wardens and Clerk to Ave Maria Lane, to the hall of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers. There, we gave thanks for the motto of the company of parish clerks: *Unitas Societatis Stabilitas.*

● *The Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks, c/o 1 Dean Trench Street, London SW1P 3HB. St Andrew by the Wardrobe, London EC4V 5DE (0171-248 7546).*

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Oswald Clark, parish clerk at St Andrew's

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Tiger cubs make great playmates for a girl whose father takes his work home with him, **Victoria O'Brien** discovers

ASHLEY COOMBES

Three-year-old Samantha with Genghis. "He keeps stealing my toys," says Samantha, whose father is head cat-keeper at a wildlife park. A fully-grown Genghis will weigh between 40 and 50 stone

Oh please Dad, can we have a cat?

Most toddlers love cuddly tiger cubs and Samantha Clark is no exception. The difference is that her furry friends are not the soft toy variety — she plays with the real thing. Her father, Giles Clark, is head cat-keeper at Paradise Wildlife Park in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, and that means there is usually one or more tiger cubs roaming around the house. "They always steal my toys," moans Samantha, three, who otherwise seems unfazed at sharing her home with playmates which in just a few months will weigh about 20 stone.

"They gain a stone a month during the early stages of their development, and eventually will weigh between 40 and 50 stone," says Mr Clark, who is currently babysitting a pair of three-month-old brothers. "We brought these two from a private collection in Ireland a few weeks ago.

"At this stage they are still friendly and open to human contact. The point about rearing tiger cubs at home is that I will still be able to walk into their enclosure at the zoo and touch and handle them, even when they are fully grown."

Genghis and Tamair (Mr Clark always names the tigers in relation to their native country) have already been weaned by their mother. Often, however, Mr Clark will take charge of tiger cubs at a much earlier stage and bottle feed them at home. "When Samantha was a baby, I was getting up in the night to feed her one hour, and having to do the same thing with the cubs the next."

Luckily for Mr Clark, with the baby tigers he can avoid the nappy changing which most new fathers have to endure. "In the wild, mother tigers encourage their young by gently nuzzling their rear end. I don't quite go that far, but if you press a warm, wet flannel there, it usually has the same effect."

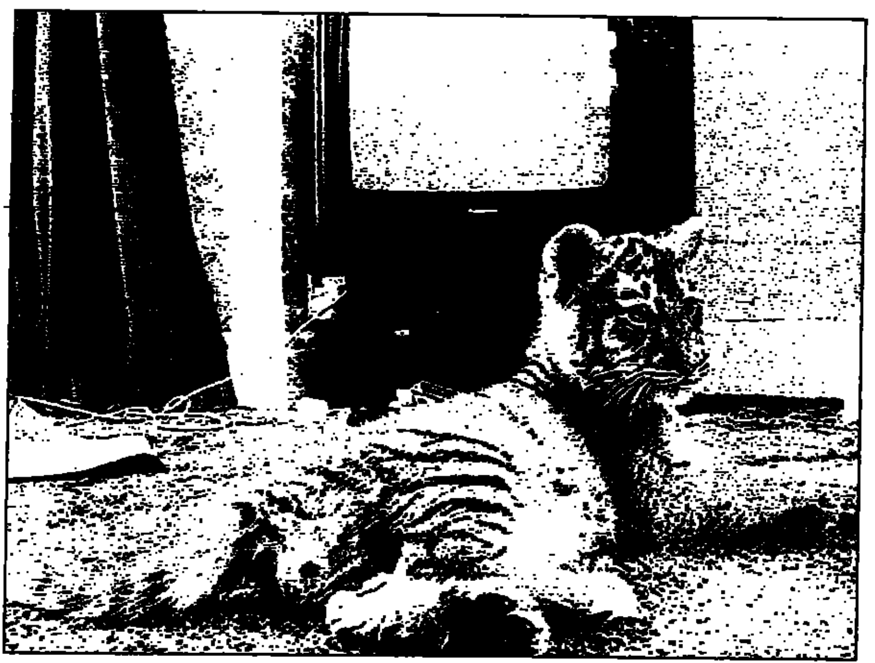
At 19, Mr Clark is probably the youngest head cat-keeper in the country, and his affinity with these playful but still wild beasts is astounding. He sleeps with Genghis and Tamair in the front room of his parent's house, and even though they are past the stage of bottle feeding, he still fetches milk for them when they wake up hungry at four in the morning. The mixture is a base of the same type of milk used for rearing puppies, with added vitamins, calcium and cod-liver oil.

> 'They are not circus animals, and I'm not here to teach them tricks. They never bite so hard that they draw blood'

Soft baby brushes are used on their fur, until they are old enough to groom themselves. Discipline is instilled at an early age, and when Genghis of Tamair bare their claws, Mr Clark is quick to discipline them with a sharp word and a tap on the nose. He says: "They are not circus animals, and I'm not here to teach them to perform tricks. But for safety reasons they can be trained not to harm people. They are still wild animals and it's important that they are allowed to play rough and tumble, and even bite me, but they are disciplined enough never to bite so hard that they draw blood."

Nibbling and biting are part of the tigers' playful social behaviour, but Mr Clark is still careful to leave the cubs in peace when they are eating. When there is food around even these doe-eyed youngsters are likely to become aggressive if you disturb them. As well as the milk compound, he feeds the cubs a mixture of meat — chicken, rabbit or horse — and blood. "Their basic instincts are still there, and being hand-reared won't change that," he says.

Without a properly-balanced diet, tiger cubs can suffer all sorts of health problems. At the early stages, calcium and phosphates are most important because their bones, teeth and claws are developing so quickly, and without sufficient amounts they are prone to rickets.



The cubs are fed a protein-rich diet of meat — chicken, rabbit or horse

An imbalance of the correct minerals and vitamins can also lead to cubs developing cataract-like symptoms, which can be reversed as long as you get them back on the right diet. "Unfortunately there is no course you can go on to learn exactly what is needed at which stage of their development," Mr Clark says. "I've hand-reared nine tigers at home, as well as ones I've looked after at the park, and it's simply a matter of learning from experience."

Hand-rearing enables him to have intimate contact with the animals once they are fully grown, and on occasion this close relationship can save their life. A year ago, Bruno, a three-year-old Bengal tiger who weighed 26 stone, became severely ill with pneumonia. He was on oxygen, had to be injected every two hours, and had to be prevented from sleeping on his side, where there was a danger he would drown in the fluid from his own lungs. "I slept in the compound with Bruno at the wildlife park for nine nights," Mr Clark says. "There was no other way to look after him."

Last Christmas there was a similar emergency situation when Turkana, a four-month-old lion cub, went into shock after a series of hernia operations. "Normally I would have stayed at the park with him," says Mr Clark, "but it was mid-winter and I didn't fancy having to spend Christmas Day outside, so I brought him home instead."

The cubs will live at home with Mr Clark until they are about four months old, but the quality of their lives in captivity will be greatly improved by this initial human contact. Mr Clark can take his tigers on long walks around the wildlife park, introduce them to other animals, and even let them swim freely in the large open pond during the summer.

"Not everyone believes in hand rearing," he admits, "but these animals have been born outside their natural state anyway. Building a close, personal relationship with them from the start simply means you can extend their territory in captivity, and allow them to gain greater stimulation from their surroundings."

Mr Clark proudly reels off the names of the tiger and lion cubs he has reared. He was particularly fond of Nikka, a Bengal tiger, whom his mother woke up with at the end of her bed one morning. "Nikka was very tame, and became like one of the family," says Mrs Clark. "Giles used to sleep with her in his room, so she basically had the run of the house."

Not all the cubs are as well-behaved as Nikka, however, and several tiger cubs later, Mr Clark's parents have had to get rid of the settee from the living room. "They tore straight through the upholstery," Mr Clark says. The family has two armchairs left, but they still end up sitting on the floor — the baby tigers like to curl up in the chairs for their midday naps.

A VET WRITES

Q **I bought two pairs of doves three weeks ago. I was told to keep them in the aviary for six weeks before letting them fly free, otherwise they might return to their original home.**

They haven't tried to escape but they are not behaving as two pairs. Two stay together at one side of the aviary, another cowers behind them — and she's had her neck pecked. The fourth bird is on his own on the opposite side of the aviary. Is there anything I can do? Would it help if I put the nest boxes in now to encourage them to pair off properly?

A I wonder if you have two pairs of doves. Or one pair and two of the same sex. They're not easy to sex. The cocks have a larger head, brighter beaks and legs and show positive courting behaviour towards their mate, which the two who are staying together appear to be doing. Some "hideaway" spots in the aviary will help and perhaps protect the pecked one. It could help to put out nest boxes in January. And if the two "loners" are one of each sex, a nesting site might give them the right idea.

Q **A neighbour's cat has taken to spending time with us. She's very welcome but she has a severe skin problem. There are scabs inside her thighs and on her back which she chews and scratches, leaving them raw. She wears a flea collar and I haven't found any fleas. She's not our cat so we can hardly take her to a vet and we don't want to confront the owners. Is there anything we can do? There are squirrels and foxes about. Could she have caught something from them?**

A Forget squirrels and foxes. Your description of the cat's troubles suggests an allergy called miliary eczema or miliary dermatitis, almost always related to flea bites. A hypersensitive cat may develop this skin reaction when she's carrying only one or two fleas. Flea collars don't last for ever. Some remain effective for four or five months, but others need renewing sooner. The collar may be out of date and it's difficult to find a solitary flea. The cat needs to see a vet and you should try to help. A tactful approach might be offering the loan of a cat basket (borrow or buy one if necessary) to facilitate the trip to the surgery. I'm sure the cat can return to an itch-free life with some simple treatment.

Q **I'm about to make a new year resolution to worm my Yorkshire terrier regularly. What's the best wormer and how often is it necessary?**

A An adult dog should be wormed every three or four months and puppies more frequently. You're aiming at *Toxocara canis* — the round worm — which doesn't upset fully grown dogs but can, rarely, cause trouble in people.

The worm eggs, from infected dogs, develop on grass under warm, moist conditions. Children may pick up worm larvae while playing in a park and, if the immature worm survives in a human — and the vast majority don't — it can damage the eye, leading to some loss of sight.

When a dog picks up worm larvae most of them survive, but many remain inactive for years as immature cysts in the muscles. Wormers based on piperazine are effective only against adult worms in the dog's intestine.

More sophisticated preparations contain fenbendazole and deal with immature cysts as well. This would be my choice. Your vet can supply the right dose, then all you have to do is remember your resolution.

JAMES ALLCOCK

● *Write to The Times Vet, Weekend*, The Times, *1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.*

ASHLEY COOMBES

One man and his dog, off the streets and in a home

Home where no one has to be alone

In the long corridors of St Mungo's hostel for the homeless, it is easy to track down Adam Henry's room. Just follow the lusty barking of his constant companion, a Staffordshire bull-terrier cross called Grudd.

Adam and Grudd are lucky benefactors of a new approach to caring for homeless people with pets.

Until recently people living rough with animals stood little or no chance of a warm bed for the night — a tough deal considering that about a quarter of them have a pet.

St Mungo's hostel, off Clapham Common, south London, was converted from three merchants' mansions. About 120 homeless people live there, only two of whom have dogs: Adam and a man with a border collie called Oslo.

But over Christmas scores of pets belonging to the homeless were receiving attention. For Grudd and Oslo there was dog food and turkey, and — more importantly — the guarantee that they would not be separated.

Thanks to St Mungo's, which pioneered the idea of letting the homeless in with their animals, more charities are opening their doors to companion animals.

It is a breakthrough that has brought Adam from despair to a real hope that after 12 years of living rough he will find a permanent home and a place on a motorcycle engineering course.

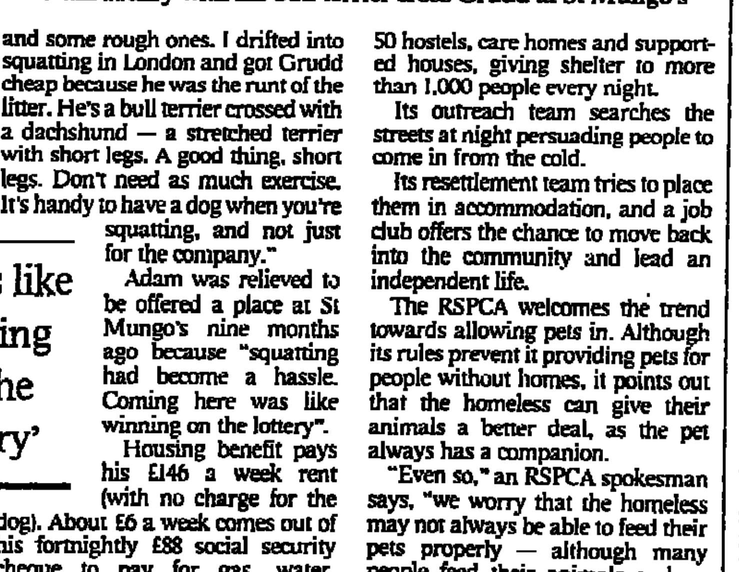
Crisis is also allowing pets into its hostels, and is operating an outreach service into the new year. A converted articulated lorry will tour the streets carrying pet food and a vet to give emergency treatment. The National Canine Defence League is running free veterinary clinics for the pets of the homeless.

Richard Smith, of the league's Hope Project, says: "Attitudes are changing. About 12 hostels in London are welcoming dogs this winter, some of them for the first time. Of course, you have to limit the number of rooms for pets. If every room offered the facility there would be chaos."

> 'It was like winning on the lottery'

At St Mungo's the rooms are the same for everybody "except that those with dogs don't have a carpet", says Adam, 29, who dropped out of cosy middle-class life in Buckinghamshire 12 years ago and went to live on a travellers' site in Wales.

"It was the punk thing to do," he says. "We had some great times — and some rough ones. I drifted into squatting in London and got Grudd cheap because he was the runt of the litter. He's a bull terrier crossed with a dachshund — a stretched terrier with short legs. A good thing, short legs. Don't need as much exercise. It's handy to have a dog when you're squatting, and not just for the company."



Adam Henry with his bull-terrier cross Grudd at St Mungo's

Adam was relieved to be offered a place at St Mungo's nine months ago because "squatting had become a hassle. Coming here was like winning on the lottery".

Housing benefit pays his £146 a week rent (with no charge for the dog). About £6 a week comes out of his fortnightly £88 social security cheque to pay for gas, water, electricity and breakfast. Cooked meals are £1.20.

St Mungo is the patron saint of Glasgow and of Celtic travellers. The charity that took his name is a housing association which also runs 50 hostels, care homes and supported houses, giving shelter to more than 1,000 people every night.

Its outreach team searches the streets at night persuading people to come in from the cold.

Its resettlement team tries to place them in accommodation, and a job club offers the chance to move back into the community and lead an independent life.

The RSPCA welcomes the trend towards allowing pets in. Although its rules prevent it providing pets for people without homes, it points out that the homeless can give their animals a better deal, as the pet always has a companion.

"Even so," an RSPCA spokesman says, "we worry that the homeless may not always be able to feed their pets properly — although many people feed their animals and go without themselves."

JACK CROSSLEY

● *St Mungo's (0181-600 3000); National Canine Defence League (0171-837 0006); Crisis (0171-377 0489).*

ADOPT ME

Ash: playful and friendly

ASH is a five-year-old female Labrador-cross who was brought into Wood Green Animal Shelter as a stray. She is playful and friendly, but a little too boisterous for some dogs and cats. Ash would suit a home with children, preferably as the only animal.

For more information, please contact Wood Green Animal Shelter on 01480 830014.

هكذا من الأصل

THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE BEST SALES

BEVERLY LEVY

Prime sites for bargain hunters

The sales are here, and for the devoted legions armed with credit cards, nothing matches the excitement of striking gold at a knockdown price, says **Deborah King**

☐ **Debenhams**
334-348 Oxford Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-580 3000). From today.
Up to 50 per cent off items throughout the store.

☐ **Fenwick**
New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 9161) and branches nationwide. From today for three weeks.
Up to 50 per cent off items throughout the store and an extra 10 per cent off all sale prices between 9.30am and 1pm today.
Women's wear: Nicole Farhi swing coats with fake fur collar in wool/cashmere reduced from £429 to £299; Christian Lacroix plain or print jeans from £75 to £49.

☐ **Harrods**
87 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-730 1234). Jan 7-31.
Up to 55 per cent off items throughout the store with an extra 10 per cent off purchases made on Jan 10 by Harrods account holders. Customers spending £200 or more in a single transaction during the first four days of the sale can enter a draw to win a Land Rover Freelander. Sale items include up to 50 per cent off selected Helmut Lang women's wear; 40 per cent off Jil Sander; 30 per cent off Prada (eg, grey woollen skinny-rib top was £204, sale price £140); 30 per cent off Ben de Lisi; Ralph Lauren ski jacket with fur trim from £690 to £449; Trussardi velvet jeans were £99.95, now £69.96; 30 per cent off Armani polo shirts; Harrods peacock cashmere and wool blend coat was £229, now £159.

Men's wear: 30 per cent off Designer Collections, eg, Romeo Gigli velvet single-breasted jacket from £529 to £349; Lanvin silk ties from £59.95 to £39.95; three Christian Dior shirts for £90; Harrods cashmere sweater was £229, now £159; up to 50 per cent off Delsey New Club premium range luggage (eg, 77cm suitcase was £149, now £73.95); 35 per cent off Travelpro crew series (eg, black rolling garment trolley from £209 to £135); 30 per cent off Hedgren soft bags; 35 per cent off Harman tapestry range; Kojis 15.23 carat diamond was £175,000, now £87,500; 50 per cent off Thomson video Nicam; 10 per cent off all guitars; 50 per cent off Harrods sterling silver cutlery; Hevea wooden chopping board was £13.95, now £6.95; 50 per cent off selected cotton table linens; 30-50 per cent off selected children's wear incuding Paul Smith, Sally Membrey and David Charles.

☐ **Harvey Nichols**
109-125 Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-235 5000). From today to Jan 11.
Up to 50 per cent off many items. During the first four days of the sale there will be an additional 10 per cent discount for Harvey Nichols account holders. A Tocca embroidered dress was £295, sale price £177; Donna Karan Signature charcoal-stripe suit from £1,040 to £520; Galliano ruffle dress with rose was £1,025, now £512.50; CK cashmere coat was £2,340, sale price £1,170. Men's wear: selected Kenzo shirts were £70, sale price £38; CK leather jacket from £590 to £354; Giorgio Armani Pure New Wool suit was £615, now £399. Dolce & Gabbana leather bag from £435 to £217.50; Mulberry wallpaper was £27.50 per roll, sale price £7; Designers Guild duvet set was £65, now £45.

☐ **House of Fraser**
Army & Navy, Victoria Street, SW1 (0171-834 1234); Barkers, Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 5432); Dickins & Jones, Regent Street, W1 (0171-734 7070); DH Evans, Oxford Street, W1 (0171-629 8800) and stores nationwide (0171-963 2236). From today.
Men's wear: up to 30 per cent off selected sportswear and 20 per cent off selected coats; £10 off Christian Dior dress shirts. Women's wear: up to 50 per cent off selected items. Homewear: from 20 to 50 per cent off selected bed linen and goosedown and feather pillows; 50 per cent off selected towels; up to 50 per cent off selected cookware items. Electrical: Toshiba 21in Nicam colour television was £379.99, sale price £299.99; Hoover A1110 auto-washer was £399.99, now £329.99; Kenwood mini hi-fi was £329.99, sale price £229.99.

☐ **John Lewis**
Oxford Street, W1 (0171-629 7711); Brent Cross Shopping Centre (0181-202 6535); Peter Jones, Sloane Square, SW1 (0171-730 3434) and 23 stores nationwide. Scotland, Cheadle, nr Manchester, Central London & High Wycombe from Dec 29. Rest of the UK from Dec 30. call 0171-629 7711 to find which date is correct for your nearest branch.
Up to 50 per cent off selected lines. The "never knowingly undersold" policy is still in operation during the clearance period. Branches sell good quality seconds throughout the sale. Men's wear: Christian Dior shirts in assorted colours at £19.50, Jonelle shirts at £9.95.

Women's wear: Jonelle knitwear (eg, 100 per cent wool jackets were £79, now £55), end-of-range Merino knitwear from £19.50 to £12.50, classic courtelle knitwear was £16, now £9.95.

Reductions of up to 20 per cent on many items of china and 35 per cent off stocks of Johnson Brothers' Heritage, Indies and Regency. Seconds include Portmeirion 27cm plate from £9.50 to £6.15, Henry Watson's pestle and mortar was £7.95, now £5.25; Tefal-Utrabase in Cobalt Blue (eg, 16cm saucepan £13; omelette pan, £5.50; 28cm frying pan £9.50); Alva stainless steel cookware (eg, 18cm steamer, £23). Selected furniture items: Harvard large sofa £595; sofabed £795. Ready-made curtains, 218cm x 228cm, were £69, now £49; seconds from £49 to £25; 50 per cent off many fabrics, eg, Sanderson seconds were £16.50 per metre, now £7.95; Windsor Damask was £15.50, now £7.95; four-head Nicam video recorder £229.

☐ **Liberty**
214-220 Regent Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-734 1234). From today to Jan 4.
Up to 50 per cent off items throughout the store. Gilt-framed wall mirrors were £399, now £199; jacquard cotton double bedspreads were £110, sale price £55; satin striped bed linen for double bed was £110, now £55; Shakespeare sofa in brick and black chenille was £3,195, now £1,595; Royal Worcester bone china "Garrick" seconds (eg, dinner plate was £12.95, now £6.45). Five-piece set of Bonanza saucepans were £170, sale price £99.

Women's wear: 50 per cent off Nicole Farhi, Ralph Lauren, John Galliano; Martin Kidman velvet jeans were £85, sale price £42.50; Liberty long velvet devoré scarves were £145, now £72.50; 50 per cent off Italian leather handbags.

Men's wear: Ralph Lauren polo shirts were £60, now £35; casual shirts were £90, sale price £49; Alan Paine cashmere crew neck was £215, now £129; Liberty Foulard ties were £35, now £17.50; Madder silk ties were £39.50, now £19.50.

☐ **Selfridges**
Oxford Street, W1 (0171-629 1234). From today.
The store will provide free energy-boosting, stress-relieving spa treatments in designated areas. Up to 50 per cent off selected items including women's fashion, eg, Ralph Lauren, Adrienne Vittadini and Marella Sport. Up to 25 per cent off selected and electronic goods — eg, Sharp camcorder was £999.99, sale price £599.99; Electrolux upright vacuum cleaner was £150, now £99. Up to 50 per cent off china and glasswear. Special reductions: Katharine Hamnett velvet wrap coat was £539, sale price £99; Christopher Farr Kilim rug from £3,000 to £500.

REGIONS

☐ **Bentalls**
High Street, Bracknell, Berkshire (01344 424678); Broadway Centre, Ealing, London W5 (0181-567 3040); Wood Street, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey (0181-546 1001); Lakeside Shopping Centre, West Thurrock, Essex (01708 860077); The Angel Centre, Tonbridge, Kent (01732 771177); 19-23 South Street, Worthing, West Sussex (01903 231801). General inquiries (0181-546 2002). From Tuesday, some stores differ, so check first.
Up to 50 per cent off.

☐ **Denners**
High Street, Yeovil, Somerset (01935 444444). From today to Jan 24.
Up to 50 per cent off men's and women's fashions and household goods.

☐ **Hoopers**
The Promenade, Cheltenham (01242 527505); North Street, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 533103); The Strand, Torquay (01803 212754); Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells (01892 530222); Hoopers for Men, The Great Hall, Tunbridge Wells (01892 529223) and Alderley Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire (01625 525381); Allerton Road, Bradford (01274 491311); James Street, Harrogate (01423 504091). For further details call free on 0800 318216. Sale starts today.
Up to 50 per cent off co-ordinated separates including Moschino, Mulberry, Olsen, Gerry Weber and contemporary fashions, eg, Marella, Fink, Jean-Paul and a selection of evening wear.

FASHION

☐ **Amanda Wakeley**
80 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-584 4009). From Jan 6.
Discounts of between 30 and 80 per cent on daywear, evening wear and cashmere.

☐ **Aquascutum**
100 Regent Street, W1 (0800 282922). Sale now on until Jan 31.
Up to 50 per cent off selected lines throughout the store. Women's wear: silk blouses were £175, now £95; cashmere coats from £1,295 to £795; wool jackets were £350, sale price £175; short raincoats were £350, now £175; quilted silk jackets from £225 to £125; woollen skirts were £150 to £95; pure wool trousers were £175, now £95; Gore-tex jackets from £375 to £225; fine wool knitwear was £250, now £150.

Men's wear: corduroy trousers were £125, now £85; cotton business shirts were £59, sale price £39; cashmere knitwear was £225, now £155; leisure shirts from £79 to £55; wool coats from £495 to £345; trenchcoats were £675, now £465; suits from £550 to £385; leisure jackets from £275 to £195.

☐ **Armando Pollini**
35 Brook Street, W1 (0171-629 7606). Sale now on.
From 30 to 40 per cent reductions; leather knee-length boots from £188 to £90.

☐ **Austin Reed**
Branches nationwide (0800 585479). From today.
Men's wear: double-breasted navy suit was £279, now £199; herringbone single-cuff shirt was £42.50, sale price £35.

Women's wear: co-ordinating trousers were £89.50, sale price £44.75; mock chamois shirts were £99, now £49.50; navy double-breasted jacket was £259, sale price £129.50.

☐ **Benetton**
Branches nationwide, check for sale dates (0171-647 4200). Regent Street megastore sale begins today.
Up to 50 per cent reductions.

☐ **Bertie**
36 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-493 5033). 26 branches nationwide, inquiries (0171-380 3800). Sale now on.
Many items at half price; old stock items from £10 to £20.

☐ **Betty Jackson**
311 Brompton Road, SW3 (0171-589 7884). From today.
All reductions are 30 per cent: eg, sheepskin coat was £780, now £546; Merino sweaters were £143, now £100; suede trousers were £429, now £300.

☐ **Bhs**
252-258 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-262 3288); 139 branches nationwide. From today.
Up to 30 per cent off selected items across all departments.

☐ **Browns**
23-27 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-491 7833). From Jan 3-31.
Up to 50 per cent off a wide selection of items.

☐ **Burberry**
18-22 Haymarket, SW1; 165 Regent Street, W1 (0171-734 4060). From today.
Selected items up to 50 per cent off, eg, women's trenchcoats were £575, sale price £375; cashmere coats were £895, now £595; men's checked shirts £85, now £45; blazers were £325, sale price £195.

☐ **Burton**
Branches nationwide (0171-291-2511). From today.
Many lines up to one-third off.

☐ **C&A**
Branches nationwide (0171-629 1244). From today.
Up to 50 per cent discount on clothes for all the family.

☐ **Chanel**
26 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 5040); 31 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6631). From Jan 9-17.
Discounts of 30 per cent on ready-to-wear and a range of evening wear and accessories.

☐ **Country Casuals**
1-5 Poland Street, W1 (0171-287 5181); branches nationwide (0121-212 2405). Sale now on.
Up to 50 per cent reduction on casualwear, chunky knitwear and most accessories.

☐ **Diesel**
55 Argyll Street, WC1 (0171-833 2255). From today.
From 30 to 50 per cent reductions on selected items.

☐ **Donna Karan**
19 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-495 3100). From today.
Discounts off selected items.

☐ **DKNY**
27 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 8089). From today.
Discounts from 20-70 per cent off the autumn/winter collection.

☐ **Emporio Armani**
191 Brompton Road, SW3 (0171-823 8818); 57-59 Long Acre, WC2 (0171-917 6882); 112a New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 8080); 84-86 King Street, Manchester (0161-839 8789); 19 John Street, The Italian Centre, Glasgow (0141-552 2277). Sale starts today.
Reductions of 30 to 50 per cent.

☐ **Episode**
172 Regent Street, W1 (0171-439 3561) and branches nationwide (0171-589 4279). Sale now on.
Black velvet trouser suit, jacket was £219, now £153; trousers were £129, sale price £90; four-ply silk full-length dress with front split was £199, now £139.

☐ **French Connection**
249 Regent Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-580 2507). Sale starts today.
Up to 30 per cent off selected items.

Continued on page 15

SHOPAROUND

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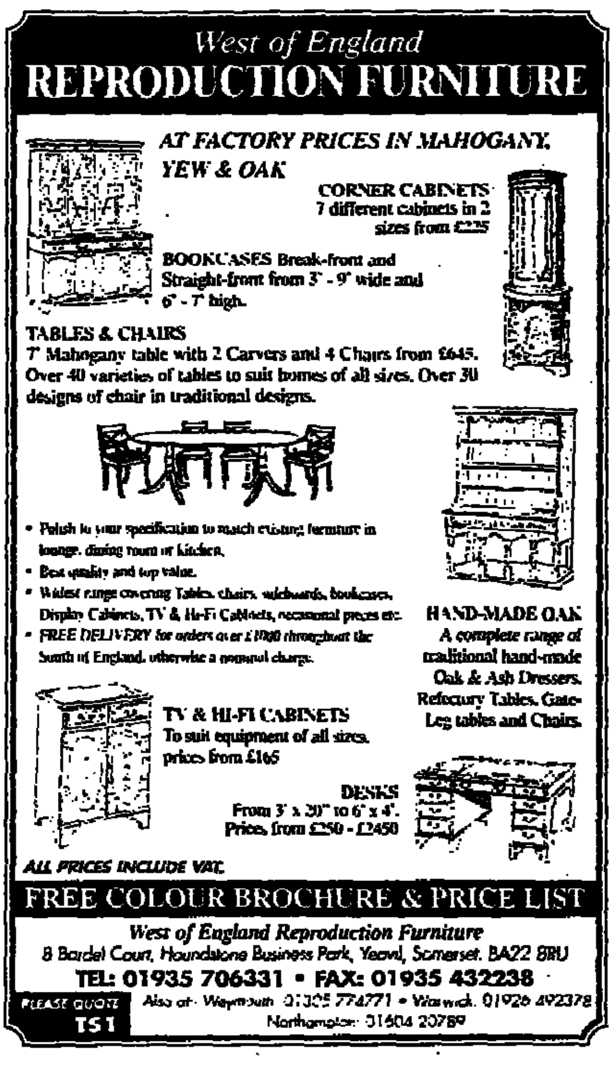
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THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE BEST SALES

30% OFF
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50% off

Continued from page 14

☐ **Georges Rech**
181-182 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 3343). Also Fenwick, Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Selfridges. From Dec 29.
Up to 30 per cent off most items.

☐ **Gianni Versace**
34-35 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 1862); Italian Centre, Glasgow (0141-552 6510). From Jan 5.
Up to 30 per cent off.

☐ **Giorgio Armani**
37 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6232). From today.
Reductions of 30 to 50 per cent.

☐ **Hennes**
261-271 Regent Street, W1 (0171-495 4003). Other branches: Brent Cross, Marble Arch, Kingston upon Thames, Harrow, Croydon, Watford, Wimbledon and branches nationwide. Inquiries: 0171-255 2031. Sale now on.
All stock reduced by 50 per cent. Black lace cardigan from £29.99 to £14.99; black velvet shirt from £19.99 to £9.99; long black fake fur coat was £99.99, sale price £49.99.

☐ **Hermès**
179 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-823 1014); 155 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 8856). Jan 3-10.
Selected ready-to-wear items reduced 40-60 per cent.

☐ **Joseph**
26 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 5470); 23 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 3713); 28 Brook Street, W1 (0171-629 6077); 124 Draycott Avenue, SW3 (0171-225 0364); 77 Fulham Road, SW3 (general inquiries 0171-823 9500). From today.
Discounts of up to 30 per cent on selected items including coats, trousers and leatherwear.

☐ **Jaeger**
200-206 Regent Street, W1 (0171-200 4000). 100 stores nationwide, general inquiries (0171-200 4211). Sale now on.
Discounts from 20-50 per cent, eg. 52 per cent off black beaded evening dress; 53 per cent off cashmere pullover; 50 per cent off damson velvet jacket.

☐ **Karen Millen**
Branches nationwide (01622 664032). From today.
From 30 to 50 per cent discount.

☐ **Ken Lane**
30 Burlington Arcade, W1 (0171-499 1364) and 58 Beauchamp Place, SW3 (0171-584 1985). From Dec 29.
Up to 50 per cent off a wide selection of costume jewellery and a further 25 per cent off existing sale items.

☐ **Kingshill Mail Order**
For copies of the Kingshill British Designer Collections and the Diffusion catalogues, call 01494 890555. Sale now on.
From 25 per cent off all designer styles in both catalogues.

☐ **Koh Samui**
65 Monmouth Street, WC2 (0171-240 4280). Sale starts today.
Up to 60 per cent off designer clothes.

☐ **Kookäi**
123 Kensington High Street, W8: 25 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-937 4411. Starts today.
Up to 50 per cent off.

☐ **Lillywhites**
24-36 Regent Street, SW1 (0171-915 4000). Eight branches nationwide. From today.
Discounts on many lines: from 25-50 per cent off.

☐ **Marks & Spencer**
Marble Arch, Oxford Street, W1 (0171-935 7954): 286 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-935 4422. From today.
End of season clearance.

☐ **MaxMara**
32 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 7941); 153 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4748). From today.
Up to 20 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Miss Selfridge**
Branches nationwide: 0181-910 1359 or 0171-938 4182. Sale now on.
Short-sleeved dresses were £25, now £10; long coats with fur collar were £125, now £65; chenille V-necks were £20, now £10.

☐ **Monsoon**
Branches nationwide (0171-313 3000). From today
Up to 50 per cent off the collection. Aster cardigan was £85, now £60; Geisha silk jacket was £199, sale price £135; short strappy Soraya dress was £180, now £80; velvet evening coat was £175, sale price £125. **Accessorize** shops are reducing selected items by 50 per cent.

☐ **Mulberry**
41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4323); 185 Brompton Road, SW1 (0171-225 0313); 23-25 Swinegate, York (01904 611055). From today.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items, eg. silk taffeta blouse was £215, now £139; full-length velvet opera coat was £695, sale price £459. Accessories: Kelby bag was £345, now £229. Home collection: paisley tartan throw was £159, now £79.50; selected wallpapers were £25 per roll, now £7.

☐ **Next**
Three hundred branches nationwide. Inquiries 0116-284 9424. From today.
Up to 50 per cent off most items: Women's wear: Camel stretch jacket was £99, now £44.99; stretch bootleg trousers were £44.99, sale price £19.99. Men's wear: navy wool pinstripe jacket was £105, now £49.99. Reductions on children's wear and interiors.

☐ **Nicole Farhi**
158 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 8368); 193 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 0877); 12 Floral Street, WC2 (0171-497 8713); 25-26 St Christopher's Place, W1 (0171-486 3416); 27 Hampstead High Street, NW3 (0171-435 0866). Sale now on until mid-Jan.
Up to 30 per cent reductions on selected items.

☐ **Nougat**
Nougat at Fenwicks, Brent Cross Shopping Centre (0181-202 8200); Jill Black, Barton Arcade, Manchester (0161-834 5160). Sale starts today.
30 per cent off most items.

☐ **Oasis**
292 Regent Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-452 1000). Sale now on.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items, bigger markdowns from Dec 29. Tiger-print skirts were £39.99, now £24.99; marble-print jackets were £89.99, now £49.99; cross-over sequinned dress was £59.99, now £39.99; up to 50 per cent off selected jewellery.

☐ **Osh Kosh B'Gosh**
17 King's Road, SW3 (0171-730 1341). Sale now on.
Up to 50 per cent off selected merchandise.

☐ **Patrick Cox**
8 Symons Street, SW3 (0171-730 6504). Patrick Cox Wannabe, 129 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-730 8886). From today.
Up to 40 per cent off men's shoes and 30 per cent off ladies'; up to 50 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Paul Smith**
40-44 Floral Street, WC2 (0171-836 7828); 10 Byard Lane, Nottingham (0115 950 6712); 66-68 Bridge Street, Manchester (0161-831 9111). Inquiries 0171-379 7133. Paul Smith Jeans, 9-11 Langley Court, WC2. From Jan 2 at London and Nottingham branches.
Discounts up to 30 per cent with special reductions on selected items.

Penhaligon's
20a Brook Street, W1 (0171-493 0002). 16 Burlington Arcade, W1 (0171-629 1416); 41 Wellington Street, WC2; (0171-836 2150). Sale starts today until mid-Jan. 8 Royal Exchange, EC3 (0171-283 0711). Sale starts Dec 30.
Lords cologne spray from £27 to £15; Violetta Bath Essence was £21, now £15; Venetian Cameo Aqua and Pearl earrings from £350 to £120; gilded enamel Egg Bottle was £125, sale price £30.

☐ **Prada**
43-45 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 0008). From today.
Up to 30 per cent off autumn/winter collection.

☐ **Ravel**
184-188 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-436 3126) and branches nationwide (0171-631 0224). Sale now on.
Up to 30 per cent off.

☐ **Red or Dead**
38 Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 1649); 33 Neal Street, WC2. From today.
Up to 40 per cent off all stock. Knee-high boots from £99 to £69; leather shoes from £75 to £49; trousers were £79, sale price £55.

☐ **Reiss**
The Reiss Building, 114 King's Road, SW3; 116 Long Acre, WC2; 245 Regent Street, W1; and branches in Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow (0171-225 4900). Sale starts today.
Discounts of 10 to 50 per cent on men's wear.

☐ **River Island**
Branches nationwide (0181-998 8822). Sale now on.
Black bootleg trousers were £24.99, now £12.99; chocolate pinstripe jacket was £49.99, sale price £29.99.

☐ **Russell & Bromley**
24-25 New Bond Street, London W1; 41 branches nationwide. Inquiries (0171-629 6903). Sale now on.
Discounts from 30-50 per cent.

☐ **The Scotch House**
2 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, SW1; 84-86 Regent Street, W1; 39-41 Princes Street, Edinburgh (0171-581 2151). From today.
Up to 40 per cent off a wide selection of items.

☐ **Simpson Piccadilly**
203 Piccadilly, W1. Customer inquiries (0171-734 2002). From today until Jan 31.
All customers can enter a free draw during the sales period to win £500. Up to 50 per cent off many items including collections by MaxMara, Synonyme and Paul Costelloe; 20 per cent off coats from Mansfield, Schneider, Feminella. DAKS quilted jackets for women were £329, now £164.50. Men's wear: DAKS suits from £299 to £149; Simpson overcoats were £350, now £275.

☐ **Snow and Rock**
188 Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 0872); 8 Grays Inn Road, WC1 (0171-831 6900); St Albans Hill, Hemel Hempstead, Herts (01442 235305); 14 Priory Queensway, Birmingham (0121-236 8280); Vale Road, Parkwood Springs, Sheffield (0114-275 1700). Inquiries, (01932 569569). Branches in Sheffield, Hemel, M25 superstore. Sale now on until Jan 11. Birmingham and London stores from today.
Selected offers on boots, skis and snowboards and up to 30 per cent off certain items of clothing.

☐ **Tie Rack**
487 Oxford Street, W1; 49 Regent Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0181-230 2333). From today.
Up to 50 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Timberland**
72 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-495 2139). Inquiries (0345 669988). From today
From 30-40 per cent discount on many items.

☐ **Valentino**
174 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 5855); Miss Valentino, 160 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 2698). Sale now on.
Up to 60 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Vivienne Westwood**
6 Davies Street, W1 (0171-629 3757); 43 Conduit Street, W1 (0171-439 1109); World's End, 430 King's Road, SW10 (0171-352 6551) Sale starts Jan 3.
Up to 20 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Wallis**
217 Oxford Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0181-910 1333).
Discounts of up to 50 per cent.

☐ **Warehouse**
19-21 Argyll Street, W1 (0171-437 7101); 75 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-278 3491. From today.
Discounts of between £5 and £20 on selected items.

☐ **Watches of Switzerland**
16 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 5916); branches nationwide (0171-931 7171). From today until Jan 24.
Up to 50 per cent off a wide range of well-known names.

☐ **Whistles**
12-14 St Christopher's Place, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-487 4484). Sale now on.
From 20 to 50 per cent off selected items.

☐ **Yves Saint Laurent rive gauche Femme**
33 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6706); 137 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-493 1800). From today.
Up to 50 per cent off autumn/winter stock. Women's wear: Wool knitted bootleg trousers were £395, now £235; tiger-print velvet scarf was £100, now £75; black and brown suede ankle boots were £195, now £115. Men's wear: wool check jacket was £640, now £385; single-breasted pinstripe suit was £750, now £375.

HOMES AND INTERIORS

☐ **Bridgewater/Matthew Rice**
789 Fulham Road, SW6 (0171-371 9033). From Jan 7-24. 4th floor, Harvey Nichols. From today for three weeks.
At least 40 per cent off pottery, cookware and linens. Salad bowl was £52.95, now £32.95; 50 per cent off Matthew Rice discontinued lines.

☐ **The Conran Shop**
Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-589 7401). From Jan 10 for two weeks.
Reductions of up to 50 per cent on ex-display upholstery and furniture. Generous reductions on discontinued ranges. Bargains in damaged goods and samples.

☐ **C.P. Hart**
Newnham Terrace, Hercules Road, SE1 (0171-902 1000). From Jan 17-31.
Substantial discounts on bathroom products, eg. roll-top baths from £550 to £300, WCs from £395 to £230.

☐ **Damask**
3-4 Broxholme House, New King's Road, SW6 (0171-731 3553). From Jan 7-31.
Selected lines of nightwear and home furnishings 25-50 per cent off; two-tone Jacquard weave throws, single was £59, now £44; Delphine cotton tablecloths were £69, sale price £34.50.

☐ **David Mellor**
4 Sloane Square, SW1 (0171-730 4259). From Jan 3.
Ten per cent discount on all standard goods., 20 per cent on most ranges of David Mellor cutlery and up to 90 per cent on slightly damaged or shop-soiled merchandise.

☐ **Descamps**
197 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 6957). From today for three weeks.
30 per cent off 1996/97 collection.

☐ **Designers Guild**
267 King's Road, SW3 (0171-243 7300). Sale from Jan 10-24. Warehouse: 6 Relay Road, Ariel Way off Wood Lane, W12. (Sale hotline: 0171-243 7343.) Begins Jan 17.
Between 30 and 50 per cent off discounted lines; 40 per cent off seconds.

☐ **Divertimenti**
45-47 Wigmore Street, W1 (0171-935 0689); 39-41 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-581 8065). From Jan 10-24.
Up to 50 per cent discount on selected items and discontinued lines. 30 per cent off hand-painted Italian tablewear and 25 per cent off Milon French tablewear.

☐ **General Trading Company**
144 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-730 0411); 10 Argyle Street, Bath (01225 461507); 2-4 Dyer Street, Cirencester (01285 652314). From Jan 7-24.
Reductions of up to 50 per cent on merchandise throughout the shop. Twenty-five per cent off dinner services, eg. Royal Worcester "Medici Green" dinner plates were £40, now £24; 50-80 per cent off cushions and natural linens.

☐ **Graham & Green**
4, 7 and 10 Elgin Crescent, W11 (0171-727 4594). From Jan 2-31.
Reductions from 20-50 per cent on many collections including Claudie Pierlot, Ghost, John Rocha and Yoshiki Hishinuma; Lolita Lempicka red satin dress was £164.50, now £95; 30 per cent off Indian furniture.

☐ **Habitat**
Stores nationwide (0645 334433). From today.
Save £100 on upholstery and furniture and up to 50 per cent off lighting and tablewear, eg. ceramic table lamp now £10. Duvet covers from £15.

☐ **Heal's**
196 Tottenham Court Road, W1; 234 King's Road, SW3; Tunsgate, Guildford, Surrey (0171-636 1666). From today until Jan 18.
Reductions in all departments include up to 15 per cent off selected ranges of furniture, upholstery and beds. Customers who use their account card to purchase goods can get an extra 10 per cent discount off sale prices. Ruskin dining table in solid oak was £959, sale price £769; glass hand-blown candlesticks were £35, now £28.

☐ **The Holding Company**
243-245 King's Road, SW3 (0171-352 1600; mail order 0171-610 9160). From today until Jan 11.
Twenty per cent off stackable drawers; 10 per cent off fabric-covered boxes; 20 per cent off modular closet furniture and 10 per cent off towel racks.

☐ **Jane Churchill**
151 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-730 9847); Liberty, Regent Street, W1 (0171-734 1234); 13 Fitzroy Street, Cambridge (01223 323211). Check branches for dates. Sloane St sale now on and runs until Jan 15.
Up to 30 per cent reduction on selected items.

☐ **Jerry's Home Store**
163 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-581 0909); 57 Heath Street, Hampstead, NW3 (0171-794 8622); The Bentall Centre, Kingston-upon-Thames (0181-549 5393); Home on Four, Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-245 6251). From today until Feb 22.
Twenty per cent off upholstery and up to 50 per cent off selected items including CD slot towers from £39.95 to £19.95; Dualit toasters were £159, sale price £139 and cherrywood dining table, reduced from £1,695 to £1,395.

☐ **The Monogrammed Linen Shop**
168 Walton Street, SW3 (0171-589 4033) and Harvey Nichols. From Jan 2 for one month.
Between 20 and 50 per cent off selected items.

☐ **The Pier**
Stores nationwide; for nearest branch: 0171-637 7001. From today to Jan 18.
Reductions range from 25 to 50 per cent on furniture, rugs, cushions, glassware and accessories: wicker armchair was £95, sale price £69; three-drawer bedroom chest was £175, now £129.

☐ **Purves & Purves**
80-81 and 83 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-580 8223). From today to Jan 24.
Up to 50 per cent off ex-display furniture, 10 per cent off any single item over £500. "Pisa" three-seater sofa and armchair was £2,196, now £1,750; Rumas shelving was £483, sale price £385; Thor stool was £315, sale price £255.

☐ **SCP Furniture Ltd**
135-139 Curtain Road, EC2 (0171-739 1869). From Jan 3-31.
Up to 50 per cent discount on floor samples: discounts of up to 15 per cent on all items ordered during the sale.

☐ **Furnitureland**
57-63 Croydon Road, SE20 (0181-768 7100). 19 stores nationwide. Sale started.
Many items reduced by up to 50 per cent. Madeira three-seater sofa was £999, now £745; king-size beds were £999, sale price £495; carpet, including underlay and fitting, from £30 per sq metre, to £20.

☐ **Simon Horn Furniture Ltd**
117-121 Wandsworth Bridge Road, SW6 (0171-731 1279). From Jan 2.
Up to 40 per cent off discontinued lines and 10 per cent on all new orders. Reductions off cots and changing units.

☐ **Smallbone of Devizes**
105-109 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-581 9989). From today.
Reductions on kitchens, bedroom and bathroom products.

☐ **The Source**
26-40 Kensington High Street, W8 (0171-937 2626); Lakeside Retail Park, West Thurrock, Essex (01708 890253); 10 Harbour Parade, Southampton (01703 336141). From today for four weeks.
From 20-30 per cent off selected lines. Cotton Tulip double duvet was £29.95, now £19.95; bathmat from £9.95 to £5; Mexican-style throw was £34.95, now £24.95.

☐ **White House**
51 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 3521). Dec 29-Jan 10.
Fifteen per cent off stock in all departments including silverware, bed linen, china, towelling robes, blankets and table linen.

● *Information correct at time of going to press. Dates and reductions may change at short notice. Please check with specific shops before making a special trip.*

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'Men are supposed to be difficult to buy for – but not my son who announced which gift he wanted with characteristic firmness'

All present and correct – finally

LIFE AND SOUL

JANE SHILLING

So a green Christmas maketh a fat churchyard, as we say in SE10. As I write, it hasn't got properly under way yet, but already I fear that the insult to my immune system is irreversible.

It began with the Toy Saga. Men are supposed to be legendarily difficult to buy for — but not my son, who announced with characteristic firmness, shortly after completing the inventory of his birthday presents in late November, that I would be getting him an X-Wing for Christmas. This is a kind of spaceship, used by either the baddies or the goodies in *Star Wars* (I neither know nor care which) to zoom about the universe in pursuit of their virtuous or wicked ends. They are widely available, Alexander assured me, from good toy shops everywhere.

I like a child who knows his own mind, so with approval and relief I noted down "Xander, X-Wing", and put the matter to the back of my mind while I got on with the great Christmas chess game that consists of translating the essence of your loved ones' personalities into some perfect but affordable object, and then presenting their objectified characters back to them, prettily gift-wrapped and tied up with glitter ribbon.

Until, suddenly, it was Christmas week and, "what are you getting for Alexander?" asked a colleague, brandishing the Shopping Trolley Barbie that she had secured for her daughter. It flashed through my mind that if I were buying for a girl, I might be tempted to choose, say, *grande horizontale* Barbie, with a flat in Cheyne Walk and enough important jewellery to secure a dignified old age ... but this thought had barely formed before it was succeeded by another, truly awful one.

So far, I have bought Alexander for Christmas precisely nothing (unless you count, which he won't, a selection of improving literature). At this rate he will be jumping out of bed on Christmas morning and running, with shining eyes and tousled curls, to find beneath the Christmas tree from his loving Mummy ... an IOU.

In a fearful panic I tore off to Oxford Street where, in a cacophony of synthetic gaiety — piped carols sung by choirs of aliens; swags of plastic holly; ho-ho-hoing from horror-movie Santas with grog-blossom noses — I scurried from one packed toy department to another, and all in vain. Everywhere I looked there were platoons of psychotic Action Men in jungle fatigues, and legions of moronic Hercules dollies with steroid muscles and teeny loin cloths. But I didn't want an action man or a Hercules. I wanted an X-Wing. And there wasn't one.

I couldn't quite believe this was happening to me. Right at the very top of my personal Index of Proscribed Parental Activities is joining the annual Gadarene rush for Christmas toys. And yet here I was. My back hurt, my feet hurt, and any moment I was going to start snivelling — which is what at least half the occupants of that particular toy department were already doing. But then, in a dark corner of a dusty bottom shelf, I saw it. Not an X-Wing, but an Imperial At-At with Remote Control Walking Action.

An At-At is a sort of enormous fighting robot — a cross between a tank and one of Hannibal's elephants, which stumps along on articulated legs, emitting deadly laser blasts to right and left. Alexander and I had had a difference of opinion when watching the *Star Wars* movie in which they appear, with me contending that if the Empire is such a formidable adversary, you'd think that someone there might have realised that the possession of knees constitutes something of a weakness in a supposedly invincible forward attack vehicle, and Alexander hot in defence of the At-At. Anyway, in the absence of an X-Wing (and I am beginning to experience doubts about their existence) a remote control At-At will do just fine, thank you.

I stuffed it into my bag, and set off at once for home, where it appears that we are still suffering from Tree Creep. This is, of course, all my fault. Usually, I manage to lure some unsuspecting chap round for a festive glass of something, and then, before he's had time to pop the cork, suggest to him that he might just like to help me bring the Christmas tree indoors. ("Yes, it is big, isn't it? No, it wasn't presented to us by the People of Norway. Very funny, I'm sure.")

This year, however, I have done the job all by myself, and it looks very nice, apart from a marked list to starboard. "Never mind," I say to Alexander, giving it a shove that sets the cherubs spinning. "I'll sort it out later. Let's get the crib out." Ours is a pretty crib, of finely modelled clay figures given to us by grandma. At one end of the piano lid we put the ox and ass and Joseph and Mary. In the middle are the shepherds and their flock, and at the far end, the Wise Men, who will progress towards the Holy Family at the rate of an inch or so a day throughout the 12 days of Christmas.

One little paper parcel remains — the infant in his manger. "Let me see," says Alexander, grabbing. "Not until Christmas," I say, snatching it away. The wrapping opens, and with a merry jangle of piano strings, Baby Jesus plunges into the bowels of the Broadwood. "Now look what you've done/made me do!" we say to each other, aghast.

We peer into the instrument. No sign of Baby Jesus. I try a glissando. Middle E sounds with a terrible plunk. "Oh well," I say. "Look on the bright side. At least you won't be practising *Away in a Manger* again this year."

Ten remedies for that hangover

From Prairie Oysters to fizzy vitamins – **Alastair Riley** offers well-tried recipes to stop your brain banging against your skull

DES JENSON

Pills, potions and vitamins, even cabbages and eels in wine... the hangover cures are endless, but which ones work?

An old saw has it that some people use statistics as drunken men use lamp-posts: for support rather than illumination. Here is a dark cocktail of numbers.

A Finnish dictionary of slang has more than 100 expressions for being drunk and 29 entries for a hangover.

A similar British reference book contains 48 ways to describe inebriation and a mere four for hangovers, including the "morning after".

Don't jump to conclusions. Doubtless the British sin as much as the average Finn. Or even the inhabitants of Myanmar, where the Burmese word *guangit* apparently conjures up a feeling which "makes a man feel that the clapper of the heaviest temple bell for miles around is playing tunes inside his skull".

Humans discovered alcohol thousands of years ago. The next day they discovered the hangover, and have been seeking a cure ever since.

Here, as the Christmas celebrations make way for the new year festivities, are my top ten most workable solutions.

1 Pliny, the sage of Ancient Rome, suggested "two eels, suffocated in wine". Another recommendation was cabbage and a necklace of parsley.

2 More acceptable today is the Prairie Oyster. The recipe, according to the late Harry MacElhone who ran Harry's New York Bar in Paris, a watering hole for Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Jean-Paul Sartre *et al* in the 1920s and 1930s: "In small tumbler, drop without breaking, one yolk of egg, two spoonfuls of Worcestershire Sauce, two dashes of Tabasco, a pinch of salt, pinch of pepper, one teaspoonful of malt vinegar."

3 As with all hangover cures, a metaphorical "pinch of salt" is not a bad idea. Here's an interesting one. A curious piece of street theatre takes place most mornings, often Mondays, in London's clubland. Jaded gents and the occasional woman enter the door of the chemist D.R. Harris (established 1790, by appointment, etc) and exit a few minutes later with a spring in their step.

Their secret? They forked out a quid for an on-the-spot shot of The Original Pick-Me-Up, the morning-after answer to the previous night's excess, tried and tested for the past 150 years.

This herbal tincture, which contains cloves and cardamom, combines two essential elements: it tastes horrible but it really works. Real men and women knock back the evil brew with plain water. Wimps add a fizzy vitamin C tablet to improve the taste.

> 'Humans discovered alcohol thousands of years ago. Next day they discovered the hangover'

4 My local chemist, faced with an OTC (chemist-speak for over the counter, ie, non-prescription) requesting a hangover cure, recommends Beecham's Resolve, advertised on the packet "for the morning after". More bluntly, the small print points out "Now and again, we all ... drink unwisely... The morning after ... the headache". The remedy contains paracetamol to relieve pain, and antacid ingredients to settle an upset stomach, as does a comparative newcomer to the market, Alka-Seltzer XS.

5 My chemist's Antipodean clientele swears by Berocca: fizzy vitamin B and C tablets, which are sold here but are a byword Down Under for a hangover cure. If they don't work, the imbibers congratulate themselves on a particularly heavy celebration the night before.

6 Keith Floyd, the TV chef, is no stranger to the consequences of over-indulgence. His menu for an invitation to dinner to discuss his latest project once consisted of a bottle of Scotch and two packets of Marlboro between us. Later he produced an entire book on the subject, with contents ranging from the history of hangovers to a five-day detox programme. Among his cures was the Geronimo (used to great effect after drinking too many margaritas): in a glass, put one large spoonful of runny honey and a shot of tequila. Top up with full-cream milk, add crushed ice and grated nutmeg. Stir.

7 Floyd also advocates the commonly held view that it is essential to drink lots of fluid (water) before going to bed. Kingsley Amis was a Vichy man. Drinking a pint of water after over-indulging has the added advantage that you might wake up in the middle of the night. This is an ideal opportunity to take your chosen cure before going back to sleep and waking up refreshed a couple of hours later.

8 Some people believe in the restorative powers of Fernet Branca, an Italian medicinal drink with a high alcohol content. It includes 40 herbs and one of which is logwood from Bolivia. It is not unlike Underberg, the German cure, but the bitters taste is possibly less pronounced.

9 Floyd's Geronimo is part of the hair-of-the-dog school of cures. As was Buster Keaton's: one raw egg in a glass of cold beer with tomato ketchup. Peter Dorrelli, head barman at the Savoy hotel in London, suggests one-third brandy, one-third Fernet Branca, one-third crème de menthe. Shake with ice and strain into a glass.

10 Surf the Internet and you'll find a cyberbarman serving cyberdrinks at the cost of a local phone call, and no cost to your liver. If that doesn't work, there are a 17 other Web sites listing cures if you are surfing after a long evening at the new year party.

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The name of the festive baby game

Being born on Christmas or New Year's Day sounds fine, but can have its drawbacks for the child later on

Pity the luckless Noels, Hollys, Ivys, Carols, Anastasias and Eugenias who never had a proper birthday party because all their friends and family were already prostrated by Christmas Day overindulgence.

And what about the 2,000 or so babies born on January 1 into a world of groaning adults in dark glasses, groping for the hair of the dog. A yellowing cutting of your crumpled infant visage in the local paper is no consolation for a lifetime of blighted birthdays.

But parents continue to yield to their passions without asking whether the fruit of their union nine months hence will thank them for being born on December 25 or February 29 or, worst of all, April 1 — when no one believes you when you say it's your birthday.

Midwives and maternity wards do their best to soften the blow. At the John Radcliffe Hospital at Oxford, the first baby born on Christmas Day is placed in a decorated crib. All the Christmas babies are given presents, local firms donate vouchers and baby goods, and the mothers are treated to a sherry.

The midwives at the John Radcliffe, like most of us, prefer not to work at Christmas, "but if we do, we make the most of it," says Lily O'Connor. "We club together to buy each other presents, the doctors dress up as Santa, and the midwives as fairies. We eat lunch together, and last year we all played games."

JOHN LAWRENCE

Expecting a busy festive season: midwives at the John Radcliffe Hospital at Oxford

The new mothers oblige by following a Christmas tradition of easy and rapid deliveries. "One after another they come in through the door and, wham, they just deliver within an hour," Ms O'Connor says. "It's because they're so determined not to miss out on the festivities, and put up with the pain until the last minute."

Alison Chevassut, a senior midwife at the John Radcliffe, saw this taken to extremes last Christmas Eve when she delivered a baby on the back seat of a car in the car park. "I stuck my head in the car and told the mother, 'Just as well you're out here — there's no room at the inn.'"

New Year's Eve babies are the same, apparently. "I'm sure alcohol has a lot to do with it," Ms O'Connor says. She also thinks New Year's Day is a better time than Christmas to have a baby. "Women who have to stay in hospital over Christmas get depressed; but at new year it's different."

And although giving birth on New Year's Day may be a raw deal, partywise, there can be consolations. Until a year ago, Farley's baby foods ran a competition for the first baby of the year, with an award of £250 for the baby and a year's supply of food worth £1,000, plus £250 for the midwife and another £250 for the unit.

The time of birth is defined as when all of the body has been born, and exact timing is crucial. The last winner was Lynette Mathieson, whose daughter Georgia was born only ten seconds into 1996, with Big Ben still striking.

The John Radcliffe also stages its own competition with the other four maternity units in the county to see which can produce the first baby of the year.

In the euphoria of new year celebrations, one thing often leads to another: the hospital has observed a large surge in the birth rate exactly nine months after New Year's Eve.

Would-be parents capable of subordinating their urges may be interested to know that Farleys-Heinz intends to provide a substantial prize for the first baby of the millennium.

While practising restraint, parents could occupy their time by thinking of appropriate names for the tiny object of their far-sightedness. What about Milly, for example? Or they might look further afield, as Diana Grattan, of Wymondham, Norfolk, did. Her fourth daughter was a New Year's baby and, after much searching, she and her husband found the middle name Etrenne — "New Year's gift".

CAROLINE BRIDGWOOD

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Bed down in the Highlands
Scotland - 20, 21

THE TIMES TRAVEL

Where to go gnome watching
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Take a trip into the 21st century

If you want to be where the action is at the dawn of the new millennium, now is the time to make plans, says Tom Chesshyre

As we prepare to see in the new year, our forward planning is likely to consist of little more than buying extra Alka-Seltzers and arguing over who will drive.

But we will have to do better than that if we want to see in the new millennium in dramatic fashion. Unbelievable as it may seem, many people are already booking holidays for the turn of the century. Most tour operators are still putting together "Millennium Eve" packages, but several have already brought out brochures, and trips are being snapped up rapidly.

If you are planning an exotic getaway, it makes sense to book as soon as possible. There is likely to be huge demand as millennium fever mounts, and those who wait could find themselves disappointed with the leftovers.

At this stage, those companies with trips are only offering "provisional" prices, because the cost of flights and hotels could increase over the next two years. Most ask for a booking deposit, refundable if you decide to drop out later.

Here is our guide to the most exotic and tempting trips on offer so far:

ANTARCTICA

SAIL into the new millennium surrounded by icebergs aboard the four-star *Marco Polo* on a 15-night all-inclusive Antarctica cruise holiday departing on December 22, 1999. Orient Lines (0171-409 2500) has a trip starting at Buenos Aires and stopping off at the Falkland Islands before reaching Port Lockroy, on the Antarctic Peninsula, for a champagne celebration on New Year's Eve.

Prices start at £4,595 (flights included). Deposit: £459.

AYERS ROCK, AUSTRALIA

ALL-WAYS Pacific (01494 875757) has a 21-night tour of Australia departing on December 20, 1999, with a gourmet New Year's Eve barbecue in the bush with a view of Ayers Rock. Complimentary champagne, wine and (of course) "tinnies" of beer.

The holiday includes stops in Melbourne, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Cairns and Sydney, plus a four-day cruise through the Great Barrier Reef.

Preliminary price: £4,895. Returnable deposit (until next June): £200.

THE CARIBBEAN

CUNARD (01703 634166) is accepting reservations on the *QE2* for a 23-night cruise departing on December 12, 1999 from Southampton and stopping at New York, Fort Lauderdale, Cozumel in Mexico, Limon in Costa Rica, Cartagena in Colombia, Aruba, Grenada and Barbados.

Millennium celebrations are planned while in port at Bridgetown in Barbados.

Cunard has several other ships with millennium cruises including ones going around Java and Spice Islands, Panama and Mexico. Prices yet to be fixed. Deposit for all trips: £750.

THE DORDOGNE, FRANCE

GET A group together and stay at one of several châteaux, houses and cottages offered by VFB Holidays (01242 240340) in the Dordogne. For example, Château de Vieux Mareuil, a 15th-century château 26 miles north-west of Perigueux, is available for three nights — including December 31 — for £450 per person; all meals included, but not the ferry crossing. It sleeps 28 people.

THE GALAPAGOS

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (0171-730 9600) is offering a seven-night cruise around the Galapagos Islands in the Pacific Ocean aboard a 140ft three-masted schooner for a seven-night cruise, departing on December 22, 1999.

Two nights are spent at a five-star hotel in Quito, and all meals are included. Provisional price (including flights): £3,340. Refundable deposit (until next October): £300.

THE HIMALAYAS

THE Ski Club of Great Britain (0181-410 2000) has heli-skiing trips on the lower slopes of the Himalayas. Skiers are dropped off by helicopter at the top of mountain runs on some of the world's best off-piste slopes. Suitable only for advanced skiers.

Accommodation is at a hotel in Manali, a village in northern India close to several Tibetan monasteries. Provisional price for ten days is £4,000. Deposit: £500.

NAMIBIA

ESCAPE millennium-mania on a 19-night fly-drive to Namibia departing on December 20, 1999 and organised by Sunvil Discovery (0181-232 9777). There are canyons, deserts and mountain ranges to explore by car.

To get away from it all completely, Terrace Bay, on the Skeleton Coast, is recommended for New Year's Eve. It is the most northerly point of Namibia accessible by vehicle and is characterised by desolate, open scenery. Accommodation for the trip is arranged in advance and is at a mixture of basic bungalows, guest houses, tented camps and small hotels. Provisional price: £2,800. Returnable deposit (until next March): £300.

NEW ZEALAND

CYCLE across New Zealand's North Island on a 625-mile journey that starts in Auckland and ends in Gisborne, officially the first city to see the sun rise on January 1, 2000. The 24-night trip — organised by 2000: First to the Sun (01903 218176) — departs on December 17, 1999 and has been designed for cyclists of moderate ability: more than 2,000 are expected to take part.

Accommodation is in a five-star tented village, all meals provided. Provisional price: £3,450 (flights included). Deposit: £345.

SWEDISH LAPLAND

FOR something out of the ordinary, Scantours (0171-839 2927) has three-night trips departing on December 29, 1999 that include a millennium-night stay at a Lapland hotel made entirely of ice. The hotel, at Jukkasjarvi, sleeps 100 guests and the focus of festivities will be at a bar serving vodka *in* the rocks — in glasses made of ice.

In the ice hotel, guests stay in sleeping bags on wooden beds covered with reindeer skins. Provisional price is £799, including flights, all meals, a night in a three-star hotel in Stockholm, one night in a chalet in Jukkasjarvi and one night in the ice hotel. Refundable deposit: £100.

TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA

THINK you can handle two millennium parties? First Dawn Celebrations (0171-272 0412) has a ten-night trip departing on December 26, 1999 including a bash in Tonga (120 miles west of the international dateline), and then a flight to Western Samoa (80 miles east of the dateline and a day behind) for another celebration.

The first party will be in the grounds of the Royal Palace overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Nuku'alofa, Tonga's capital, and the second will be on the beach in Apia, Western Samoa's capital. Further details available in March. Expected price (flights included): about £4,450.

VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

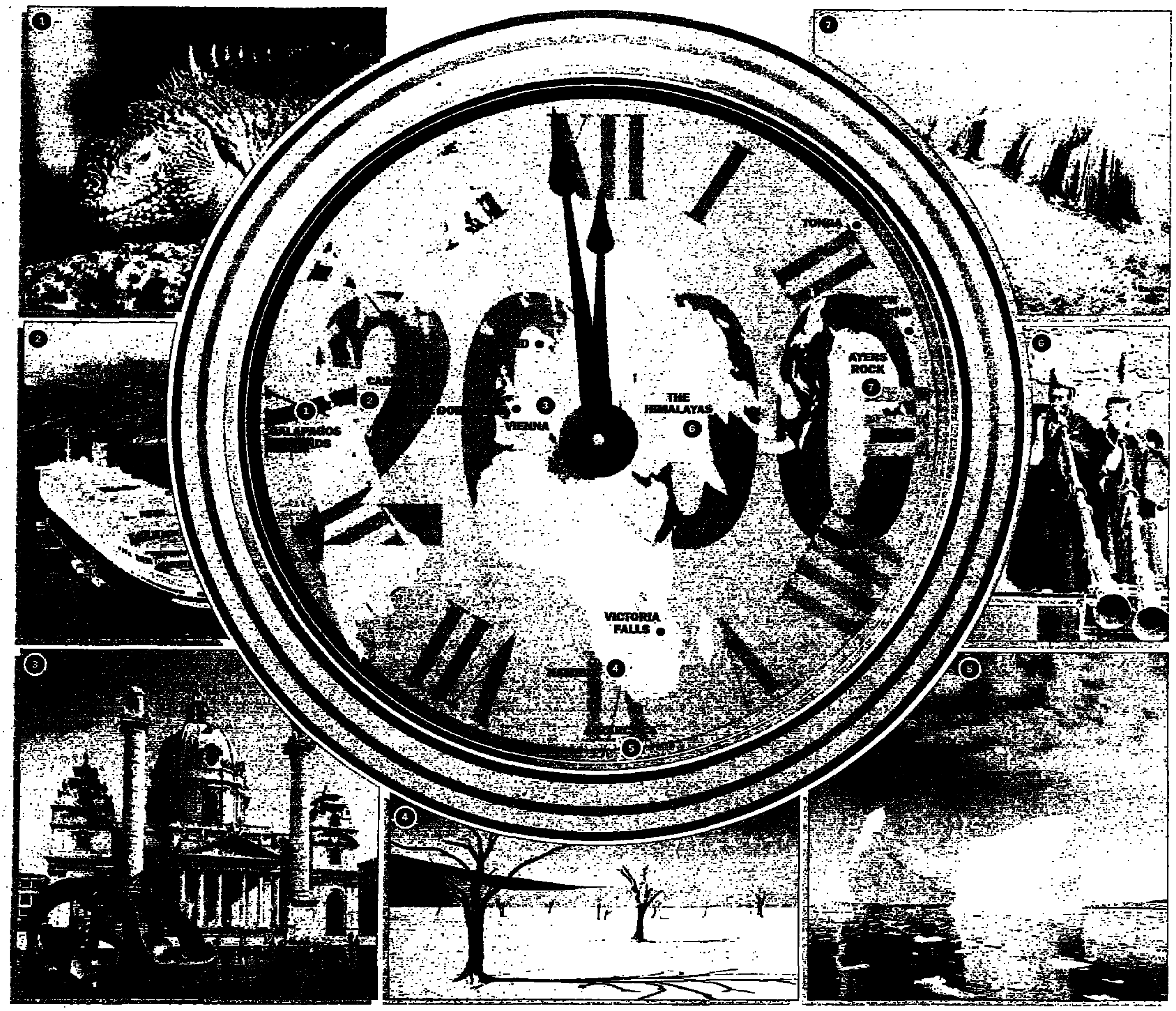
WATCH the sun set over Victoria Falls before seeing in the new millennium on a two-week tour of Africa organised by Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 9600). The trip starts in Luxor and then moves on to Victoria Falls, Zanzibar, the Serengeti National Park in Kenya, and the Masai Mara National Reserve.

Millennium celebrations — a dinner and dance — are at the five-star Victoria Falls Hotel. Provisional price: £11,500 (including flights). Refundable deposit (until next October): £1,250.

VIENNA

JET off to Vienna on Concorde with Goodwood Travel (01227 763336) on a three-night trip departing on December 29, 1999 that includes a Millennium's Eve Ball at the Hofburg Palace. Guests will be taken by horse-drawn carriage from the five-star Marriott Hotel to the palace, where there will be a gala banquet and a midnight waltz. The price for New Year's Eve 1999 is not yet finalised, but New Year's Eve 1998 is £2,695 (including flights, breakfasts and dinners); deposit: £539. Prices are expected to be higher for the millennium event.

Goodwood Travel also plans a Concorde trip taking in two millennium celebrations by jetting between the time zones. Details are expected next November.



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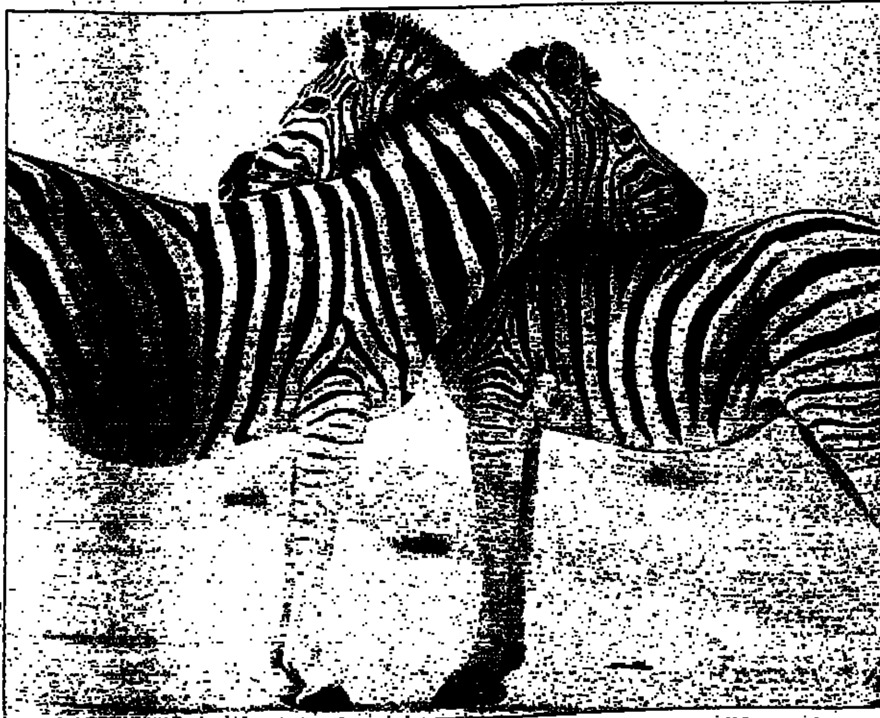
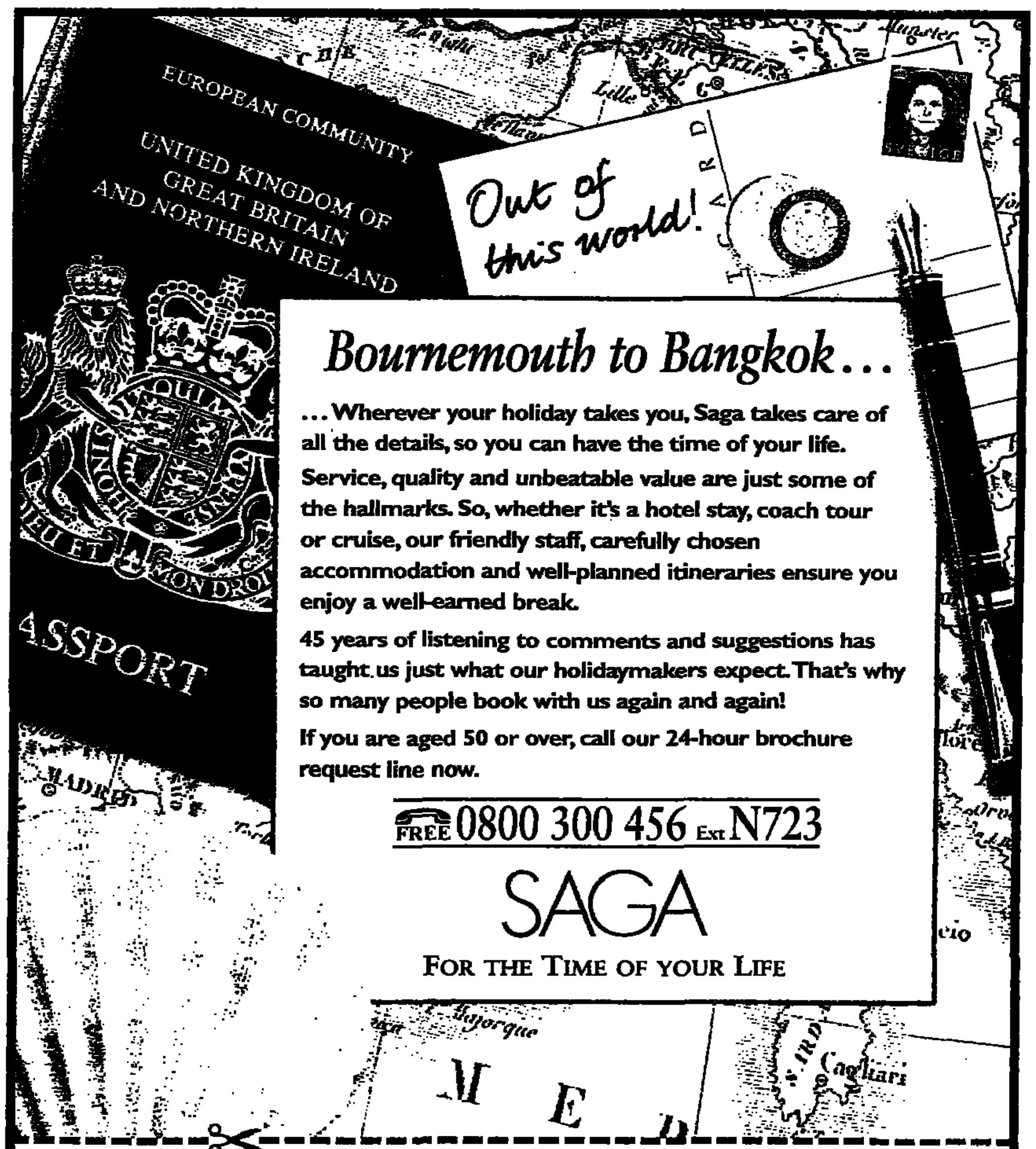


Zebra crossing: celebrate the new millennium with the wildlife in Africa



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SKI WEEKEND A GUIDE TO THE GUIDES

Five of the best to follow off-piste

DOUG SAGER

DOUG SAGER

Knowing the ropes can be a lifesaver in the Alps: the Canadian guide John Hogg (third from left) helps to pull a skier out of a crevasse on the Haute Route in the mountains between Zermatt and Chamonix

"FOLLOW ME" can be the most inspiring or intimidating of words, depending on how much confidence your guide has in you, and how much confidence you have in him or her. A good guide is rare. Here is a handful, picked from 15 years of off-piste skiing. Whichever guide you go with, be aware that being tied to two ends of a rope is the ultimate bonding experience.

■ SEPPI ENZIO

GIUSEPPE (Seppi) Enzio is a guide's guide, the most expert in the most challenging off-piste resort in the Alps, Alagna in Italy, where he was born and raised. He grew up humping heavy weights to the highest mountain refuge in the Alps, the Margherita Hut at 4,559m on the Monte Rosa massif on the Swiss-Italian border. He has since spent lonely winters and busy summers as a hut warden, the Alpine equivalent of being a lighthouse keeper.

Seppi worked for 11 years in the Himalayas, climbing with Rheinhold Messner and supervising the construction of a research lab at Everest base camp. Since then, he has had me at the end of his rope on several occasions, abseiling down the Malfatta and other vertiginous couloirs above Alagna. He is the veteran of numerous 60-degree plus extreme descents. "But I don't want to do that any more. I've seen too many people die," he says. These days he concentrates on selected clients.

The true but terrible test of any guide is when a client comes to grief. I watched for five hours as Seppi worked to free one such unlucky skier entombed in ice up to his chest in a 25m-deep crevasse. In the end, Seppi had to hang upside down from a metal tripod and chip the client out with a pneumatic drill, so narrow was the gap.

■ NICK PARKS

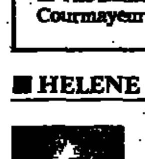
ONE perennial caveat about British guides is that they lack that inborn *sixth-sense* granted to guides who grew up and trekked year-round in their local Alps. Nick Parks more than makes up for that with a unique sympathy for the inexperienced but avid Briton introduced to the Alps; something anyone who has had to suffer an overnight bivouac with a stand-offish Swiss guide will appreciate.

"I know nothing so satisfying as seeing the grin on people's faces after seeing them safely down an off-piste run — that's why I'm a guide," Nick says.

He has the infectious grin of an elf and the stamina of a mountain troll. He started to learn to ski at the age of 11 on an Erna Low package holiday to Austria. I first met him in Ste-Foy, France, with a group of off-piste beginners. What most impressed me was his patience in teaching these tyros how to make their way through snow which changed from powder to crust to ice.

The two of us went on to climb and ski the steep and treacherous Couloir en S off the back side of Arcs 2000. The route needs a 10ft leap off a cornice. I had stood at the top several times before with other guides, who always turned back into the resort skiing of Les Arcs. Nick gave me the confidence to take the plunge.

■ HELENE STEINER



HELENE has one of the most demanding guiding jobs in the world. She was the first woman to graduate from Austria's mountain guide academy and is the most experienced female wilderness helicopter skiing guide in the world. She comes from a family of guides in tiny Leogang, but says: "I never thought about guiding as a conscious decision. We were always in the mountains and that's the way it turned out."

Recently, she helped her father and brother to establish Canada's most remote helicopter skiing operations, Klondike Heli Skiing, on the edges of the Yukon Territories. But this winter, preferring the home comforts of Whistler in British Columbia, she will be flying with the local Whistler Helicopter Skiing.

I skied hundreds of thousands of vertical feet with Helene while she was working at the world's single largest helicopter skiing operation, Mike Wiegele in Blue River, BC. Helicopter guides work long hours in hostile terrain. Crashes and avalanches are a constant worry.

Helene finds heli-guiding as much a test of her psychological skills as a strain on her leg muscles. "It's not easy to tell a high-powered business executive who's paying £3,000 for a week of skiing to stop acting like a schoolkid," she says. But they do, or she sends them home on the next chopper.

■ HANS SOLMSSEN

HANS Solmssen is a Hawaiian who left the sand and sea behind for the snows of Switzerland. He has the distinction of being the first American admitted into the élite, and insular, society of Swiss mountain guides. Hans's engaging and outgoing personality extends to publishing his own Web page (*www.climbnet.com/lafantastique*), with photographs of recent descents and safety information on weather and avalanche conditions.

He is one of a new, young breed of mountain guides and is as ready to trade Alpine skis for telemarks in winter as he is to free-climb with clients in the summer. Having discovered the Alps only within the past 15 years, Hans conveys an enthusiasm and a sense of shared discovery in the mountains which many older guides tend to lack.

I remember skiing with Hans years before he became a guide, but he already had a laid-back way of dealing with foolhardy skiers. Standing at the top of a steep pitch brimming with deep powder, which I was urging him to jump into, he said: "Well, Doug, you *could* ski down there, but I've dug out three buried skiers here this year, so hold on a minute while I get my shovel."

■ JOHN HOGG

JOHN Hogg introduced a generation of Britons to the ski safari — week-long powder tours using ski lifts to go up, then skiing off-piste down deserted valleys to a different resort each evening.

He started out in his native Canada as a lumberjack, worked as a World Cup ski technician and became one of the first professional helicopter skiing guides. It was in a Canadian lodge that he met his wife-to-be, who was from a mountaineering family in Andermatt, Switzerland.

John settled in Andermatt, where his innovative itineraries on the Saas Fee-to-Chamonix Haute Route built up a client base of avid skiers, the Prince of Wales among them.

I shall never forget his jokey asides: "Gee, I never thought you'd make it up here" and "I told you to put on those crampons" — the former on the Strahlhorn (4,190m) and the latter as I slipped back down the Oberalpstock (3,328m).

He has now moved his family back to Canada, alarmed that his sons might grow up speaking the Swiss-German dialect. But he still spends much of every winter guiding in the Alps.

HOW TO BOOK **A SKI GUIDE**

■ *In Switzerland, Verbier's Bureau des* Guides (0041 27775 3366) charges £160 for one client or two, and £16 for each additional skier. Chamonix's Compagnie des Guides (00 334 5053 0088), the oldest and most élite such organisation in the world, charges about the same price, £155, but will include up to six skiers in the group at no extra charge.

■ Austria is considerably cheaper for skiers going solo; the Arlberg School in St Anton *(0043 5446 3411; fax 5446 2306) charging £11 for* the first client and £8.50 for each extra person.

■ *The Italian national fee, as quoted by the* Courmayeur Guides Bureau (0039 165 842064; fax *842357) is £110 for a group of up to four.*

■ Nick Parks and Seppi Enzio run regular ski weeks through *Ski Weekend (01367 241636)*, the British firm with the most varied off-piste programme. Hans Solmssen works with the Ecole Fantastique (0041 27771 4141) in Verbier but can also be contacted for private tours on 0041 27771 7683 or on his Web site — *www.climbnet.com/lafantastique*.

■ Helene Steiner works with Whistler Heli Skiing (001 604 932 4105) and can also be contacted for private trips on 001 604 938 0727. *John Hogg is available for Canadian helicopter* skiing or tours in the Alps at 001 250 342 0307.

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"...then rosemary and sage on top, that's essential."

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The waiter must have overheard me. Literally minutes later the chef appeared at our table, pen and paper in hand. With incredible patience he wrote down, not only the recipe, but a whole stack of tips on the preparation too.

I shouldn't have been surprised. Every crew member seemed to go out of their way to make our cruise that little more special.

The atmosphere was – well – intimate. We're already planning another trip with NCL next year.

Meanwhile, I've got some serious cooking to do to help pass the time.

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PETER WILSON

VINOS Casa Ciriaco COMIDAS
VINOS Casa Ciriaco CERVEZAS

Madrid in winter: the light is dramatically different and the people retreat indoors, to cosy bars and restaurants serving hearty, warming fare; and winter rain is always swiftly followed by sunshine and blue sky

Death in the afternoon

Madrid has winter dishes to defeat its bitter weather. **Adam Hopkins** tries a chickpea broth too *fuerte* for an evening meal

When winter comes, I hurry to Madrid. Though quite a scruff myself, I love the sense of smartness on the edge of shadow, the bright light spilling out of windows on to elegant shopping streets like Serrano and Velázquez, and the older areas where they still make fine guitars in workshops out the back and sell religious statuary to the devout.

I love the noisy, cosy winter bars, the restaurants where diners tuck into garlic soup or *cocido madrileño*, a chickpea broth soon followed by the chickpeas themselves and the mighty slabs of meat brewed up in it. These dishes celebrate the city's rural hinterland on the high Castilian plateau; its partly village essence.

No doubt it is a case of early imprinting — I lived and worked in Madrid when I was younger, teaching as so many of us do. Later, as a visiting journalist, I played a tiny role in chronicling the demise of the Franco dictatorship. And always, I loved the winter best. Today, I nurture the belief that others will find it as exciting as I do when most of the other tourists have gone home.

I have to say it can rain in winter in Madrid — sometimes quite hard and miserably — but the sun is usually out again in a few hours: the sky bright blue, as in a landscape by the Flemish master Joachim Patinir. This observation comes from Salvador Dalí, who lived here as a student, as did Luis Buñuel, who later made a film or two, and Federico García Lorca, poet-dramatist.

"But even if the sun shines, remember that Madrid is a mountain city." The advice is offered by my journalistic friend, Tom, grandson of the Spanish writer Gregorio Marañon, and off we go into that routine about how, from the terrace of the Royal Palace, you can see the snows of the Guadarrama mountains 30 miles away, and about the sneaky wind of Madrid which, so the proverb says, will fail to douse a candle but put out a man's life.

"And chestnuts in the street," said Tom, "that's what winter means to me. Otherwise, we go into hibernation — the best bullfighters away in South and Central America, wine merchants shut up in their offices worrying about the price of Ribera del Duero."

Hibernation indeed! What is intoxicating about Madrid is the endless evidence of popular vivacity, the way the Madrileños live, with energy untamed by dull considerations such as work.

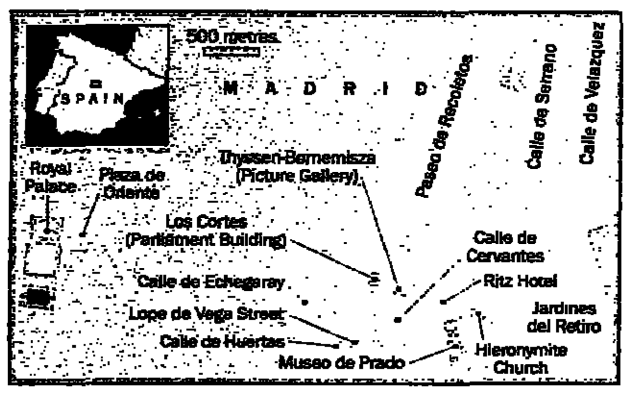
You can tell from my tone, of course, that I have indeed been in Madrid just recently. I stayed, what's more, in the Palace Hotel, where I used to put up as a youthful journalist. In those days, the vast, dark rooms were dominated by enormous dark wardrobes. When a foreign journalist picked up the phone, there would be long wheezes and short clicks as the state's recording gear switched into action. "Blast," you would think, going off to make your assignations with the then-illegal opposition.

Nowadays, the Palace Hotel is a Sheraton, plugged into the modern world. Instead of ancient telephone and wardrobe, I had a stinging power-shower, built-in cupboard partially concealed by a pale Regency striped wallpaper, a computer point and a fax machine — everything possible to create a sense of light and openness and ease of communication.

One does not want to labour the comparison, but the change could be taken as a shorthand version of the change in Madrid itself: a city once shut off, but now a kind of beacon in a remade southern Europe, with its proper quota of painters and writers, film-makers, designers and disputatious journalists.

Some of them, like their forebears, still hang out in the Café Gijón in the Paseo de Recoletos, at least in winter, when the foreigners ease up. That's where I met Tom.

I stayed in bed late on the first morning — it seems very natural to do this in Madrid. Then I made a few phone calls, studied the *Guía del Ocio*, the genuinely indispensable guide to what's on in the city, and found there would be plenty to entertain me.



The three-month autumn festival, a set of episodic Spanish and international events, was still in its dying weeks, and though I had missed good jazz the night before, there was promising-looking English-language theatre. Dance seemed specially good, with leading US groups making at least a brief appearance.

Eventually, coming in after dark, I checked the view from my hotel window and discovered that I could look up left to the parliament building. Immediately opposite, a fraction beneath window level, was the tiled roof of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, most glorious of private collections, brought to Madrid and the public domain five years ago. Down to my right, behind a line of trees, stood the Ritz Hotel. Above it, there rose the tall Hieronymite Church, where fashionable Madrid gets married. The Museo del Prado was out of sight, around the corner from the church.

The point, apart from the pleasure of it all, is that the part of Madrid the visitor will most engage with for reasons cultural — the mostly 18th-century Bourbon part — is small and gracious, while Old Madrid, that earlier Habsburg tangle, is just a stone's throw away. None of it is too difficult at all.

Summoning my energy at last, I walked into Old Madrid, out of the hotel and into the Barrio Literario or Literary Quarter. Here the great novelist Cervantes lies at rest in Lope de Vega Street, named after the lyric poet of Spain's golden age of theatre, while Lope de Vega's house is in Cervantes Street. Next door to the latter is a little hand-labour factory, typical of Old Madrid, which is still turning out crisps and *churros*, those long extrusions of deep-fried batter consumed with coffee or chocolate in the morning.

"Yes," says the friendly owner, "we are the opposition to Lope de Vega. But here's a funny thing. When we were young and went to the cinema, the crisps we bought were called 'patatas inglesas'."

When I got to the little area of bars and tapas bars round Echegaray Street — Calle de Echegaray, that is — I was able to check pretty pleasurably that old favourites like La Trucha (The Trout) were still serving up snacks of vegetables seared on a hot plate; shrimps with garlic; pig's ear; you name it.

But best of all for winter, back on the main street, is Lhardy, its old-fashioned wooden-framed shop windows loaded with delicatessen goodies, Spanish style, with mountain ham and matured sheep's cheese from La Mancha, hare pâté and dark quince jelly. You serve yourself with consommé, fill a glass with sherry, read your paper, chat to friends, pay at the till and go. Next, I walked down to the Royal Palace, to admire the way the traffic has been kept out of the newly reformed and now rather dashing Plaza de Oriente.

But really I was on my way to La Bola, an elegant tavern-restaurant where the best of *cocido madrileño* is served — at lunchtime only, *cocido* being regarded as a poor preparation for a quiet night. It comes in a single earthenware pot with an inward curve where a human waist would be and a little round lid on top. Warning you to protect yourself with a napkin at chest level, the waiter holds the lid on tight and pours out soup through the tiny crack on to a bed of noodles. When the soup is gone, he ladles out the meat and chickpeas, and when that's half consumed he comes around with greasy cabbage.

Walloping it down, I ask my neighbour whether he will be taking a siesta afterwards. "No," he says, "definitely not. This dish is really strong. It could be dangerous." He goes on munching. Then he leans across to assure me he was only joking. "It's strong, it's really *fuerte*, but it is good for you," he says.

I am trying to shock my system by giving art a miss, but even so, next day, I find myself turning into the Thyssen collection. By the time I have checked a Patinir sky and one or two other matters, the morning has disappeared.

My final throw in the public arena is a visit to Seseña, maker of traditional Spanish capes, as worn by gentlemen, and some ladies, too. Capes are back in fashion, Tom has been telling me.

"Not so," says Florencio Córdoba, who cuts the capes. "Sales are steady, year on year. We never go out of fashion." In heavy cloth like worsted, with a mini cape at shoulder level and a neat little brooch in Salamanca style to fasten it, a good class cape will set you back some 67,000 pesetas (£250). And then you have to wear it, handling the sweep of material with all the drama of the bullfight.

I try one on but end up feeling like a wally. I'll never have the cape-handling capacity to be a proper Madrileño. I'm just a poor old northern European looking in — which doesn't mean I don't find it delightful. Actually — *viva la diferencia* — all the more so.

MADRID FACT FILE

MECKY FOGELING

City bustle around Madrid's Palacio de Communicaciones at the Plaza de Cibeles

- Adam Hopkins travelled with Kirker Holidays (0171-231 3333), which offers three nights B&B at the Palace Hotel in Madrid from £376 per person until March 12, based on two sharing a room and including flights from Gatwick. Prices for three nights at the two-star, central Hotel Londres start at £257.
- Where to eat: Lhardy, Carrera de san Gerónimo 8 (00 341 521 3385): as well as the deli there is an elegant 19th-century restaurant upstairs. Café Gijón, Paseo de Recoletos 21 (521 5425). La Trucha, Calle Manuel Fernández y González 3 (429 5833). Viva Madrid, Calle Manuel Fernández y González 7 (no phone): can be crowded. La Bola, Calle de la Bola 5 (547 6930).
- Culture: Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Palacio de Villahermosa, Paseo del Prado 8 (420 3944). Museo del Prado, Paseo del Prado (429 0770); both closed Mondays. Casa-Museo de Lope de Vega, Calle Cervantes 11 (429 9216): closed Sundays and Mondays.
- Guidebooks: *Madrid Observed* by Michael Jacob (Pallas Athene, £9.95); *Blue Guide Madrid* by Annie Bennett (Blue Guides, £10.99).
- Spanish Tourist Office (0171-486 8077).

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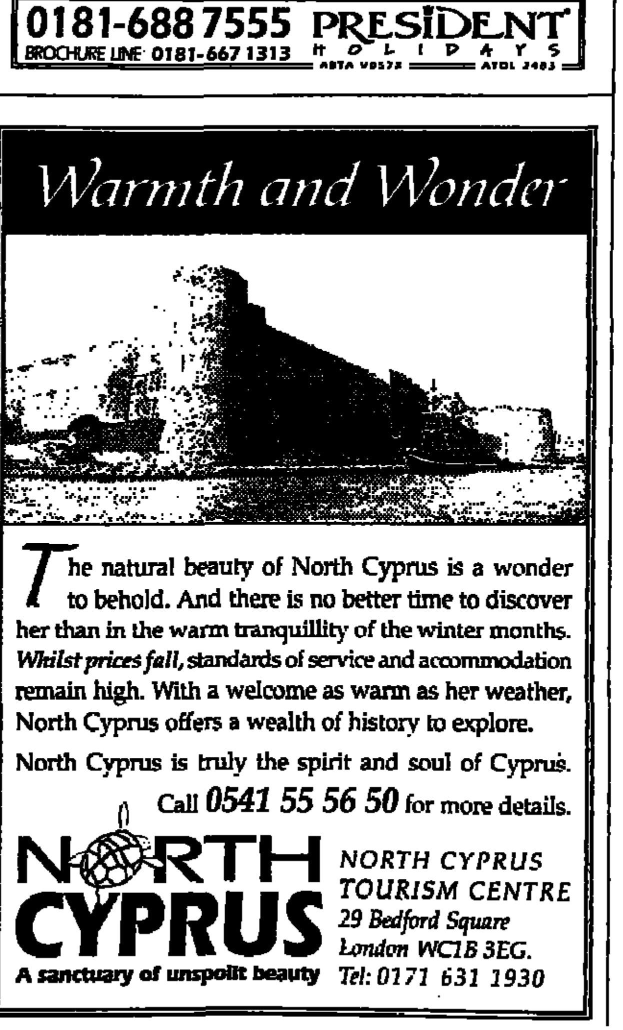
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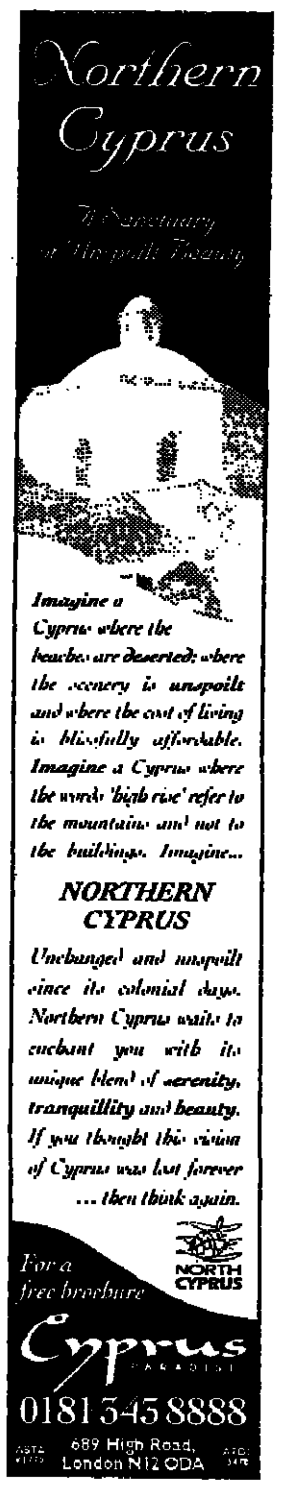
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SCOTLAND: COUNTRY HOUSE HOTELS

Nigel Tisdall is crowned king of an exclusive castle – at least for a day

NIGEL TISDALL

Skibo Castle in Scotland has used its baronial history to create a comfortable holiday resort for members of the Carnegie Club

Swathed in tartan luxury

James, the head butler, was standing in the Great Hall when I arrived at Skibo Castle. A blanched version of Anthony Hopkins, he smiled at full beam as he welcomed me to a weekend in the sporran of luxury. Flanked by a bevy of staff in tartan uniforms, he was so polite, so unflappable, so methodically concerned for my well-being, that I almost began to wonder if he was a serial killer.

Skibo, 50 miles north of Inverness, could have fallen straight off a shortbread tin. Until 1981, it was the Sutherland home of Margaret Carnegie, daughter of Andrew Carnegie, the Dunfermline-born steel magnate and philanthropist. He bought its lordly buildings almost a century ago, pouring in £2 million to create a sumptuous baronial castle overlooking Dornoch Firth, where such grandees as Gladstone, Kipling and Edward VII were entertained.

In another life, Skibo and its 7,500 acres might now be a National Trust for Scotland property, but seven years ago it was acquired by the millionaire Peter de Savary, who has poured in another £17 million in a bold attempt to create one the most lavish all-inclusive holiday resorts in Europe.

He is known to his staff as PDS, and in this venture, the initials might well stand for Pretty Damn Shrewd, for he observed our growing taste for holidays in all-paid-up environments such as cruise ships and cash-free hotel compounds, and applied their stress-defusing principles to the Scottish sporting estate.

The result at Skibo is that bits of Club Med, timeshare and the gentleman's club have been rolled up into a tartan comforter called the Carnegie Club. Any potential member may stay once in its stately halls, a trial sojourn that is intended to lead to an annual family membership.

Staying in an all-inclusive stately home is liberating. It empties your pockets — not just because of the cost, but because there is no need to carry anything. There is nothing to sign for, no room keys with wrist-breaking weights, no reception, not even a bar. That worried me until I discovered there was James instead, who appeared from all corners at all hours to inquire whether guests needed "freshening up".

Everything at Skibo is Liberty Hall — providing you can forget the matter *of the £550 plus VAT cost of your all-in* trial night for two. Members and their guests are invited to partake of a challenging 18-hole links course designed by Donald Steel that is unfettered by tee-times.

They can enjoy salmon and trout fishing, clay pigeon shooting, archery, off-road driving, the marble-lined swimming pool and — as if the wilderness of the surrounding moors and lochs was not enough — a gym equipped with walking machines.

The morning after the night before during my stay, I awoke in an antique four-poster bed. The sheets were crisp white linen, the tea came in bone china cups and I found I had shacked up with a hot water bottle with a wee tartan cover. Scotch mist fondled the windows of my turret room. As I lay listening to the wailing trail of the wake-up piper, I made a safe bet that breakfast would feature porridge, kippers and haddock.

Amid all of this, Skibo is a fully functioning castle, employing 100 staff and backed by a £1 million grant from the Highland Enterprise Board. It has become neither ruin nor museum, and it was heartening to see *Scottish dancing in the Great Hall* once more.

When Carnegie lived here he called Skibo "heaven on earth". Now anyone can enter it — at a hell of a price.

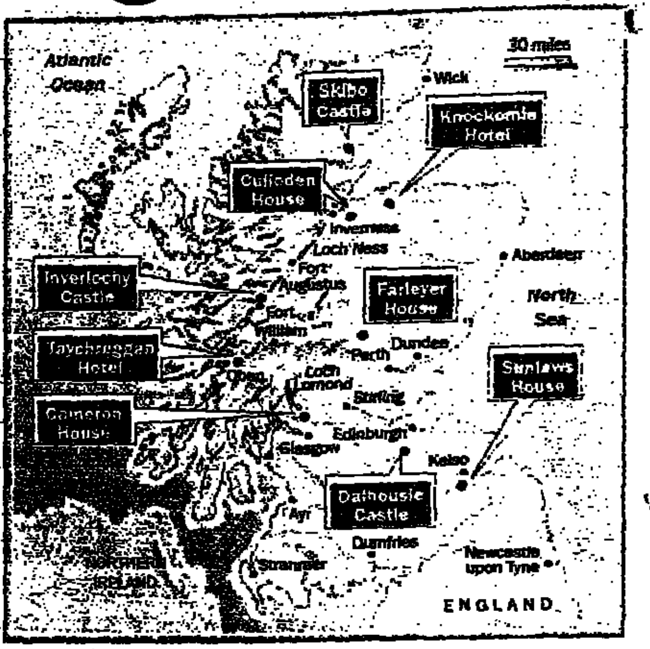
● *Skibo Castle, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3RQ (01862 894600). Prospective members of the Carnegie Club may stay at the castle for £550 a night for two people including all meals, drinks and most sporting activities. Thereafter, you must become a member: membership costs £2,500 a year per family plus residence charges of £425 a night per couple. Prices exclude VAT.*

Fine food and warm toes in the Highlands

I remember being struck by a hotel in the country in Scotland (as opposed to a Scottish Country House Hotel) *some 25 years ago. A Victorian* mansion, presumably *purpose-built as a hotel to serve* the nearby railway halt and *ferry pier, it was stunningly* located, overlooking one of the *most* beautiful lochs, across which the autumn-yellowed *forest climbed half the height* of a craggy Munro. But the *hotel* clearly *did not consider* its outlook of interest. Every bedroom window was protected from the view by one of *those three-mirror* dressing tables of the 1930s. As for the food, lunch was scarcely better than a school dinner.

Things have changed since then. The business of converting pocket-draining Victorian hunting lodges and mansions into homely hostelries began in the 1970s and now you can hardly drive a country mile without encountering a decent, often outstanding, country house hotel.

The food, too, has improved. Each of the hotels featured on these pages is proud of its kitchen, presided over by signature chefs making the most of Scotland's culinary treasures — fish, shellfish from the *islands, game, venison, fruit* and wild funghi.



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NO relation to the Cameron Clan, Cameron House derives its name from Cam Sron (Gaelic for "crooked nose"), the spit of land on which it stands at the southwest corner of Loch Lomond.

For 330 years the house was the home of the Smollett family. For a short period in the 1970s and 1980s it was a bear park. For an even shorter period, since 1990, it has been a hotel and in no time at all has won accolades for its food and lodging, including, two years ago, a Michelin star.

Only the public rooms and the hotel's five suites are in the original Victorian mansion. The rest are in new extensions and, despite their exteriors melding into the lochside background, the lodgings feel *much more hotel, albeit five*-star, than country house.

As well as à la carte or fixed price dining, the chef will consult you and prepare six surprise courses based on your choices. Being the kind of person who prefers the accident of the radio to the certainty of the CD, it suited me perfectly.

Checking in: Cameron House Hotel and Country Estate, Loch Lomond, Dunbartonshire G83 8QZ (01389-755565; fax 759522). From January 2 to March 31, singles cost from £135 B&B, doubles from £170, B&B, for two; £190 for dinner B&B for two.

CULLODEN HOUSE

CULLODEN House became a hotel in the 1970s and, after a faltering start, was taken over a year ago by an Anglophile American partnership.

The house sits on the ruins of Culloden Castle, where *Bonnie Prince Charlie made* his headquarters before the battle of *1745, and where his* adversary, "Butcher" Cumberland, stayed afterwards. Seven years later it burnt down. Another 40 years went by before it was rebuilt.

The first sight of Culloden, across a greensward big enough to stage hold the Olympics, enclosed by an arboretum of sequoias, limes, beeches and conifers in every shade of green, is inspiring.

Continued on page 21

Blow your mind
...just add gunpowder
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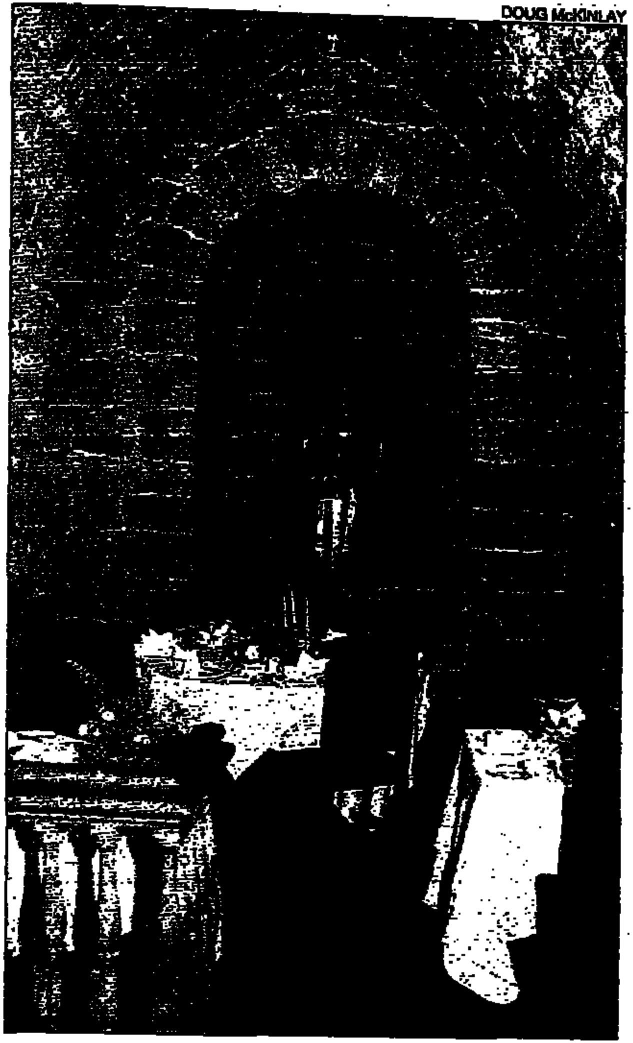
هكذا من الأصل

SCOTLAND: COUNTRY HOUSE HOTELS


DOUG McKINLAY

The Dungeon restaurant at Dalhousie Castle

SEAN HIGNETT

The first sight of Culloden House Hotel, a handsome Georgian mansion, is across a greensward that is big enough to stage the Olympics

From page 20

Hidden behind the trees is the Garden pavilion, framed by the stumps of two sequoias felled by a storm and carved into a giant Highland warrior and a woman chained to a "jougs", a tree where gossips were humiliated. The pavilion, with its four apartment-suites, each with its own kitchen, was built recently and matches the main house.

In the main house, each room and suite is as it was — substantial. And the original 18th-century internal shutters are still in working order.

Checking in: Culloden House Hotel, Milton of Culloden, Inverness IV1 2NZ (01463 790461; fax 792181). Special offer to readers of *The Times* until March 31: dinner, bed and breakfast £85 per person per night, based on two sharing a double room and staying at least two nights.

DALHOUSIE CASTLE

SO rural and secluded is the setting of Dalhousie Castle that it is hard to believe the hotel is only 20 minutes from the middle of Edinburgh. It lies in wooded parkland beside the River Esk, with the Lammermuir Hills filling the horizon behind a meadow where horses graze and herons, mink and beaver visit.

The original castle was built in the 13th century by the Ramsay family, who were ennobled with the title Dalhousie in the 17th century. The family still owns the castle, which became a hotel in the 1970s and has just been completely refurbished.

The present building is largely Victorian but a medieval heart survives. The lobby boasts intricately fan-vaulted ceilings topped with twin glass cupolas, and a double stone staircase whose brass stair-rails circle up to a landing known as the Quarterdeck, because of its resemblance to the bridge of a ship. Holding it all up are three tall, windowless, barrel-vaulted chambers with enormously thick walls that are now the hotel's restaurant, known as The Dungeon. An old well has been uncovered and is the centre-piece of the Simund De Ramseia suite.

Other rooms are "themed" after family heroes or visitors to the castle — Oliver Cromwell, Sir Walter Scott and Queen Victoria among them, the latter no doubt grateful to her then host, the tenth Earl of Dalhousie, for managing to obtain for her the Kohinoor diamond while Governor of India.

Checking in: Dalhousie Castle, Bonnyrigg, Edinburgh EH19 3JB (01875 820153, fax 821936). Until April 30, single B&B from £90; twin/double from £110; theme rooms, for two people, from £140. Special offer for *Times* readers: 20 per cent off these rates, based on two sharing for a minimum of two nights.

FARLEYER HOUSE

FARLEYER is in the heart of Scotland, a few miles up a minor B road that crosses the striking, four-obelisked bridge over the Tay in Aberfeldy, between Stirling and Inverness.

Farleyer dates from the 16th century as a farmhouse but when Bonnie Prince Charlie took refuge in neighbouring Castle Menzies, the castle bailiff had to give up his quarters, so he moved into Farleyer and extended it substantially. Farleyer was converted from hunting lodge to hotel only in 1989 and the rooms are spacious enough to make you feel you are a house guest rather than a customer.

The great outdoors, however, is the real attraction. Some of the Upper Tay's best salmon beats are nearby and Farleyer offers a variety of angling packages. It is a good centre for walking, too, and the hotel provides map sheets for 20-odd routes in the area.

Checking in: Farleyer House, Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2JE (01887 820332, fax 829430). The Virgin Hotel Collection (0800 716919) offers a two-night break, with dinner, B&B, for £175 per person. Extra nights and Sunday nights, £80. Valid until March 31.

INVERLOCHY CASTLE

INVERLOCHY Castle is indisputably the jewel of Scotland's country house hotels, the most luxurious and one of the most expensive in the country. Queen Victoria spent a week here in 1873 as a guest of Lord Abinger, and wrote in her diary: "I never saw a lovelier or more romantic spot."

The Abinger family sold the house and its estates in 1944 to a Canadian couple, the Hobbs, and it was Mrs Hobbs who converted Inverlochy to a hotel in 1972. Since then the guest list has read like a *Who's Who* — everyone from the Queen and Charlie Chaplin to Naomi Campbell and Robert de Niro. The latest addition to the roll-call is William Hague, who took over Inverlochy for his stag party last month and worked off the hangovers by leading his mates up Ben Nevis.

On the other side of the hotel, the terrace descends to rough moorland and Inverlochy's own small loch. Inside, the galleried and gilded Great Hall rises to a ceiling frescoed with cherubs cavorting in the clouds. The restaurant is presided over by Simon Haigh, who trained with Raymond Blanc. Do not, however, expect or demand bottled water. Inverlochy deliberately disconnected from the mains some years ago and returned to its own springs and reservoirs on Ben Nevis itself. It is much, much better than anything with a lid on.

Checking in: Inverlochy Castle Hotel, Fort William PH33 6SN (01397 702177, fax 702953). Single B&B from £180 per night; twin/double from £250; suite from £390. The hotel is closed in January and February, but in March, dinner, B&B costs £165 per person, based on two sharing.

KNOCKOMIE HOTEL

KNOCKOMIE Hotel lies in rural surroundings on the River Findhorn, a few miles south of Forres, and much of the hotel's rolling 25 acres is let to a local farmer. The Highland cattle grazing next to the hotel entrance are his and, when mature, some of them will make a star appearance on the hotel menu.

But it was local produce of a different order that grabbed my eye: pan-fried chanterelles with garlic. Thierry Fournot, a young Parisian, here to improve his English and flatter the Scottish palate, had picked the chanterelles at six that morning and, he told me, they were probably the last of the season. Well, not quite — there were more delicious funghi infesting my main course of mixed fillets in a grain mustard sauce.

Knockomie has been taking in guests since the early 1800s, when Miss Smith, the housekeeper, used to entertain the circuit judges on their progress around the northern assizes. The present building dates from 1914 and is a pretty example of the Arts & Crafts movement. The rooms are not numbered — each is named after a malt. The hotel suggests that you can order the malt your room is named after, if you cannot decide which to ask for. This is also helpful if, having ordered sufficient, you cannot remember which room you are in.

Checking in: Knockomie Hotel, Grantown Road, Forres, Moray IV36 0SG (01309 673146; fax 673290). A special offer for *Times* readers until April 30 gives dinner, B&B for £49.50 per person, based on two sharing a double room (superior room, £59.50). Minimum stay two nights.

SUNLAWS HOUSE

SUNLAWS lies just north of the border with Northumbria. Early English visitors were far from welcome, for the original castle was burnt down by Northumbrian bandits in 1493. That set the tone for the tinderbox history that followed — subsequent rebuildings of Sunlaws went up in flames a further three times: in 1720, 1770 and 1853.

The final Victorian mansion stands — adequately provided with fire extinguishers — in its own 200-acre estate abutting the lands of Floors Castle, home of the Duke of Roxburghe. The duke acquired Sunlaws in 1969 and, with his wife, an interior designer, converted the Jacobean-style mansion, fitting it out with antique furniture from Floors and looting the ducal cellars to furnish the wine list, as well as supplying the kitchen with fish and game from the Roxburghe estate.

Ignoring its incendiary history, log fires blaze in the drawing room, in the panelled library that doubles as a bar, and in the hallway, right inside the front door: a welcome touch when you arrive during a nippy Scottish winter. The food wins prizes, the staff are unbeatably friendly and efficient.

There is plenty to do without even leaving the hotel grounds: tennis courts and a croquet lawn, a clay pigeon range with instruction from one of Britain's top coaches — even I managed to hit a few — a trout pond, a beat on the River Teviot for serious anglers and, since last spring, a championship golf course. Riding, hawking and falconry are nearby and Floors Castle is open free to hotel guests — cinema-goers may recognise the mansion as the Greystokes of the Tarzan movie.

Checking in: Sunlaws House Hotel, Kelso TD5 8JZ (01573 450331; fax 450661). B&B costs £105 in a single, from £150 for two sharing a twin/double; £195 for a four-poster and £245 for a suite. *Times* special offer, January 2 to February 28, gives two nights for the price of one, at the above rates, subject to availability, and a maximum stay of two nights. Quote "*Times* Winter Sale Offer".

TAYCHREGGAN HOTEL

"IT'S a far cry to Lochawe!" used to be the war-cry of the fighting Campbells, flaunting the impossibility of being pursued and routed from their strongholds around the loch. Things have changed little, for Taychreggan lies at the end of a narrow and twisting single-track road.

The rooms are cosy rather than spacious — Taychreggan was, after all, an inn rather than a grand house — but it would be hard to get somewhere more secluded on mainland Britain, and the sheer beauty of the place is spectacular. The food, too, is acknowledged as outstanding, even by its rival hoteliers who have named Taychreggan "Scotland's ultimate dining experience" for two years running.

Checking in: Taychreggan Hotel, Kilchrenan, by Taynuilt, Argyll PA35 1HA (01866 833211/833366, fax 833244). The Virgin Hotel Collection (0800 716919) offers two nights' B&B for £130 per person; extra nights at £60 per person; Sunday night £50 per person. Valid until March 31.

● Times *reader offers should be mentioned at the time of booking, and are subject to availability.*

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JILL CRAWSHAW'S
TRAVEL TIPS

Passport to panic

THE last-minute panic to get our son off to South Africa this Christmas alerted me to the number of countries where a British passport is valid for only nine and a half years and not, as you may think, for ten. Visa and Passport Services (0171-229 4784) says countries which will not allow visitors to enter unless there are at least six months left on the passport include Singapore, Australia, the United States, Thailand, Jamaica, Malaysia, Kenya, Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Jordan and Israel. Papua New Guinea requires a full year, but New Zealand and Morocco need only three months.

Our son had to queue at the passport office in London for a ten-year passport — hardly convenient for anyone outside the capital.

A NEW service from Stansted to Nuremberg starts in February with independent airline Eurowings (01293 596699). There will be three departures each weekday; 14-day advance-purchase fares available until the end of March will cost from £99, excluding taxes. One of Germany's liveliest cities, Nuremberg is also a gateway to Bavaria's Romantic Road — a delightful route through medieval gems such as Nordlingen, Dinkelsbuhl and Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber. The latter is home to a year-round Christmas shop, which sells wonderful toys and decorations — and where the queues begin in January.

Gnome tome

WHERE are the best places for gnome-watching? According to the newly published *The Complete Book of the Gnome* (AA, £14.99), the best area is north Devon, home of both the Gnome Reserve at West Putford near Bradworthy, where more than 1,000 gnomes and pixies are assembled, and Gnomeland at Watermouth Castle near Ilfracombe, which attracts about 150,000 visitors a year. The world's most expensive gnome, said to be insured for £1 million, and the only survivor of a large 19th-century collection, is on display at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire. If you read the book, you will never sneer at these cheeky chappies again. It seems they have an ancient pedigree stretching back hundreds of years to Scandinavian and Norse mythology — and of course John Major, our former Prime Minister, worked briefly in the family gnome business.

RICHARD DEAN

Yvonne Evans and some of the 200 gnomes at her parents' home in Haverfordwest West. Visitors come from as far as Australia to see them

Tent peg

NEW fly-drive camping holidays from Canvas Holidays (01383 644000) sound as if they are a perfect way to avoid long, hot slogs down continental motorways with mutinous children in the back of the car. But are they worth it? With the fly-drive scheme, a 14-night holiday in early May based at Norcenni in Tuscany (ideal for visiting Florence and Siena), for a family of two adults and two children aged two to 11, will cost £1,371. This price includes return flights, tent accommodation and Group A car hire. It rises to £2,187 in peak season.

However, self-drive holidays departing on the same dates cost only £263 and £913 respectively per party, inclusive of ferry-crossing for car and passengers, overnight stops en route at Saarburg and Valais campsites, and ten nights in Norcenni. Petrol and motorway tolls are not included in the cost.

Canvas is also offering new wildlife programmes for adults and children at six camp sites, where experts take enthusiasts bat-detecting, deer and wild boar spotting, and on other country pursuits. The price per family at one of these sites, Les Hauts in the Dordogne, is from £239-£749 for 14 nights.

Flying high

DESPITE Richard Branson's recent balloon flop, airborne excursions are on the up-and-up, according to ticket specialist Seligo (0121-643 4321). The firm, which sells tickets and trips to 150 attractions worldwide, ranging from Hard Rock cafés to flamenco shows, is including an increasing number of helicopter and balloon rides in Europe and the United States.

A new one for the company is a Paris helicopter trip which takes you over the Eiffel Tower and the World Cup Football Stadium for £89, while a balloon ride over Walt Disney World and central Florida costs £106.

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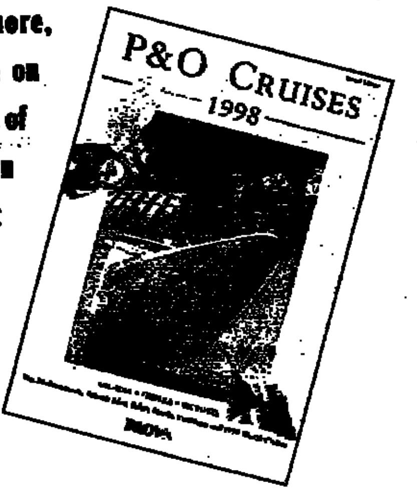

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PACK YOUR BAGS

☐ THE Lanesborough is supposedly Madonna's favourite London hotel — but even she might blanche at splashing out £150,000 on a new year celebration for six. But for those with city bonuses to burn, the hotel promises an unforgettable three days. On December 30, Lanesborough butlers arrive with Louis Vuitton luggage to help you pack. Then a helicopter transports you to Heathrow, whence a private jet whisks you to St Moritz to be waited on by the hotel's staff and chefs at a private chalet. On December 31, there is skiing, plus a late lunch at La Marmite, then a helicopter and private jet back to London. After pulling your crackers (which each contain jewellery worth £5,000), enjoy a six-course dinner, cabaret and a night in the Royal Suite at the Lanesborough. On New Year's Day you will be helicoptered home to recover. Interested? Call 0171-259 5599.

☐ YOU can still see in the new year in the Mediterranean. Bellair Holidays (0181-785 3266) has availability on a seven-night trip to Malta, leaving from Gatwick on December 29, 30 or 31. Seven nights' self-catering in St Julians costs from £244 per person, based on five sharing, including return flights, transfers and taxes.

☐ JOIN THE jet set for a spot of country hopping. Premier Holidays (01787 884031) is offering 19 days travelling through Bangkok, Hong Kong, Singapore and Bali, departing on January 5, 8 or 9. Three nights room-only accommodation in each city, and five nights, room only, in Bali costs from £1,299 per person, including flights and transfers, all with Qantas.

☐ HIT THE piste for the beginning of the season with First Choice, booked through Thomas Cook (0990 181818). Seven nights B&B at Söll in Austria, leaving on Saturday, January 3, costs from £179 per person, including flights, transfers and taxes.

JOANNA HUNTER

FLYING VISITS

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Birmingham – Copenhagen	£99 BA	£390 BA
London – Dublin	£69 BA (ex-Gatwick)	from £139 BA (ex-Gatwick)
London – Edinburgh	from £58 easyJet (ex-Luton)	£198 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London – Malaga	£149 BA (ex-Gatwick)	£569 BA (ex-Gatwick)
London – Milan	£259 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)	£992 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
Edinburgh – Munich	£98 BA	£636 BA
Newcastle – Paris	£108 BA	£415 BA
London – Valencia	£139 BA (ex-Gatwick)	£516 BA (ex-Gatwick)

Airline telephone numbers
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British Airways (BA) 0345 222111
easyJet 0990 292929
Transavia 01293 596650

Notes:
[illegible]

Air fares to show taxes

PASSENGERS will find it easier to work out the cost of flying from January 1, when all airlines will have to advertise air fares inclusive of taxes, *Steve Keenan writes.*

Until now, airlines and their brokers have been allowed to publish attractive lead-in prices, only to add in the small print, "subject to taxes," which can add more than £50 to the price of a ticket.

The Air Transport Users' Council and consumer groups complained about the practice, which they said misled customers. Now the Advertising Standards Authority has insisted on all-in pricing.

Last month budget airline easyJet started to include in its published fares taxes such as Air Passenger Duty, which adds £10 to European flights and £20 to long-haul services.

Other airlines have argued that it will be complicated to add on taxes, which vary depending on the destination.

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CAIRNS	£385	£659	CHICAGO	£157	£191	JO'BURG	£271	£352
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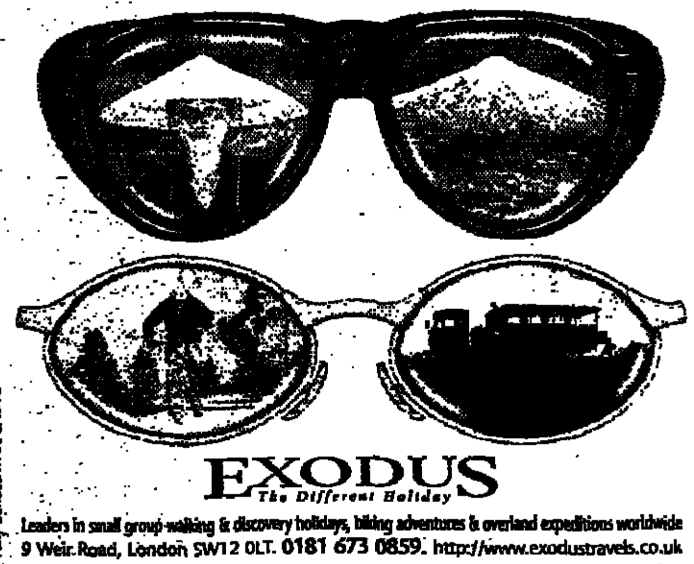

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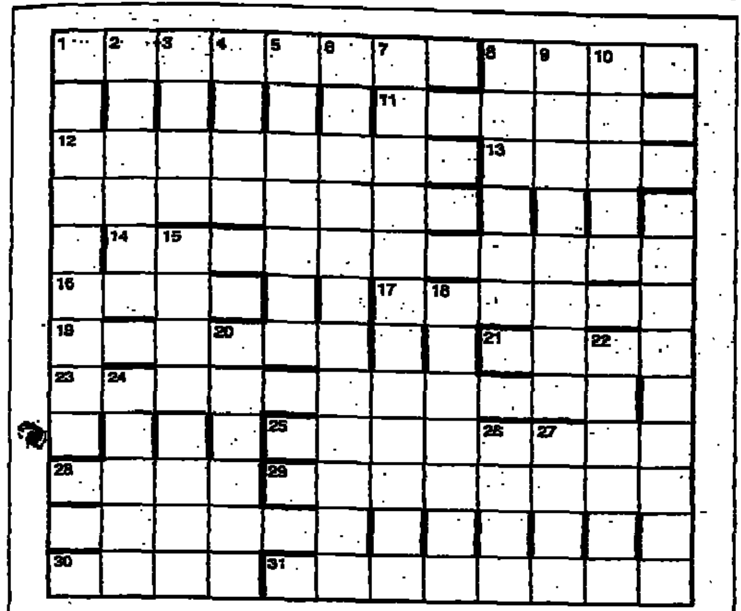

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Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3442, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, by Thursday, January 8.

W

WATERSTONE'S

The winner will receive a Waterstone's book token worth £75. Five *runners-up* will each receive a book token worth £10

KATE ATKINSON
KELLERMAN
UNDER MY SKIN
The Horse Whisperer NICHOLAS EVANS

THE four unclued lights (which are arranged in the usual Across and then Down order) give an appropriate seven-word quotation in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (from the fourth edition).

Answers to any clues that are not in sympathy with their headings should be entered with a twist.

MARTIAL

1 Punishment as before where POWs are kept powerless? (8)
8 Dress ('Something old') is retained by one from earlier service (4)
11 Archie shot in repayment for atrocity (6)
12 Remove responsibility from one's Father, brought in to make union that out of this world! (8)
13 Vicar reads initial lesson — those at the front make it electric stuff (4)
14 Honourably recall military leader with medal, one in remote warring (11)
16 Wartime bodyguard holding exercises, turning back venomous attacker (4)
17 Evacuating military engineers? That's not right, jerk! (6)
19 Row with Cockney bride's group at the reception? (6)
21 Stops head of Infantry replacing that of Artillery in sudden attacks (4)
23 Fact: if alone may get splice out of love (11)
25 Conical tower initially manoeuvred into place — an inspiration for jousting-site? (8)
28 Song used in marriage (when two become one) (4)
29 Husband holds one marriage certificate, not second — *that's the most direct way (8,2 words)*
30 The stake involved in urban terrorism (4)
31 One receiving alimony, perhaps, recalled row about married pain endlessly (8)

MARITAL

1 This time married, and — yes — excited (9)
2 Each successful service involves Church rules (6)
3 Nothing in the Signals Corps for heavy fliers (4)
4 Part of bridalwear, if torn, shows split (4)
5 I need a few soldiers (I'll fill a corresponding role) (7)
6 *Guinness's ultimate*: picture's opening, one abandoned stretch of River. Tommies tortured, nothing less (music from Arnold) (12)
8 Marrying various types of church mouse/mice in front of church, possibly (12)
9 Sexual attraction left out of marital jousting in Poland? (8)
10 Church: turned up after appointed time, almost causing sensation (5)
15 Not space to blow up such as some mines (8)
18 Advance Light Infantry takes cover in clump of trees, being visible at night (7)
20 Dish cooked for rear half of armies, possibly (6)
22 Woman married almost without a hint of love (6)
24 Force soldiers (rather tiddly) in the cooler (5)
26 Landed in military manoeuvring, avoiding muddy borders (4)
27 Cover middle of nuptial bed up (4)

S	E	V	I	E	B	E	U	M	S	J	I	L
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Solution and Notes to No 3439
Cargo by Sabre

The unclued lights represent cargo of the Jumblies — see *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, Fourth Edition. Answers to normal clues: 1a SIEVE; 6a JUMBLIES:* 13a NORS; 15a GUNDOGS; 26a STRIPLEAF, 29a BERT, 34a CURTAIN; 37a EYESORES; 2d COINHERE; 5d DOGBERRY; 7d LINE-ENGRAVING; 8d DEMURE; 12d STATELY; 19d FIREBIRD; 20d BRANCHED; 32d ROUTE.

Unjumbled words in other clues: 14a yites; 16a rebutted; 17a dares; 18a magnate; 22a cloud; 23a face; 24a west; 25a take; 33a enters; 35a snow; 36a rioted; 38a alter; 1d capitals; 3d gourde; 4d cost; 9d married; 10d derange; 11d annoyed; 21d rupees; *22d negroid; 27d* tops; *28d time; 30d Muse; 31d* outside.

The winner is M.J. Tomkinson, of Glasgow, Scotland. The runners up are L.E. Ellis, of Devizes, Wiltshire; Mary Vincent, of Bristol, Avon; John Davenport, of Kenley, Surrey; Joan Floyd, of Saint-Amand-Montrond, France; Ann Taggart, of Bury St. Edmonds, Suffolk.

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

MICHAEL COURTNEY is an Australian international and a highly effective rubber bridge star. See if you could find the play he made at trick one on the hand below.

Dir West Game all Rubber Bridge

North:
♠ K Q 4 3
♥ A 7 6 2
♦ K 10 5
♣ A 2

West:
♠ J 10 9 7 6 2
♥ Q 10 9 5
♦ 3 2
♣ K

East:
♠ A
♥ -
♦ J 9
♣ Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

South:
♠ 8 5
♥ K J 8 4 3
♦ A Q 8 7 6 4
♣ -

W	N	E	S
Pass	1 NT	5 C	6 D
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
Pass	Redouble	All Pass	

Contract: Six Diamonds Redoubled, by South
Lead: two of spades

I was East. I cannot remember the last time I was dealt a 10-card suit in a non-Goulash.

Picking up a 10-2-1 distribution is about 100,000 to one against; on *average a three sessions a week* player would get one every 20 years.

To bid Five Clubs over North's strong 1NT passes most tests of respectability. Courtney (South) typically *speculated Six Diamonds*, and when that came back to me I doubled (a "Lightner" double) for an unusual lead.

Naturally, I hoped that West would lead a heart. North redoubled, partly because his hand was quite suitable for play in diamonds, and partly because that is the macho way they play at TGR's.

Now West had to interpret the double. From his point of view a spade void in my hand seemed more likely than a heart void, so in order to indicate a club return if I were ruffing he led his lowest spade.

Look at the declarer's problem. When dummy comes down he can tell that East must be doubling because he has a heart void. It cannot be because East has a spade void — that would give West seven spades headed by the A J 10, from which he would then have led the ace.

Thus declarer can see that West has a *third-round heart* trick. That means his only chance of making twelve tricks is to make two spade tricks and then squeeze West in the majors.

So he made the outstanding play *of ducking the spade in dummy*. He said afterwards that he was hoping I would put up the ace from, say, A 9 or A 10.

As the cards lay, however, playing low made the contract by force. I took the ace and returned a club.

Now Courtney had 11 tricks. After taking the ace of clubs and all the diamonds his last five cards were a spade and four hearts, and dummy had three spades and two hearts.

West could not keep three spades and a heart guard — the last diamond had squeezed him for the twelfth trick.

That duck of the opening spade was the best play made against me *in 1997*.

TWO BRAINS

From page 26

Question 1:
Noel!

Question 2:
Water (H_2O)

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

THE Hastings tournament starts on Monday. Founded in 1895, it is Britain's strongest all-play-all grandmaster tournament.

Among the competitors will be grandmaster James Plaskett, the former British champion, grandmaster Chris Ward, the teenage prodigy Luke McShane and the defending champion from last year, Dr John Nunn.

The venue is the Cinque Ports Hotel in Hastings, East Sussex. Spectators are welcome for the rounds which start at 2pm. Further details are available on 01424 431970.

The most famous game in the long sequence of Hastings tournaments was from the first one, an event notable for the proliferation of brilliant games which it produced.

Black was so stunned by White's sensational attack that, rather than formally resign, von Bardeleben simply stalked away from the board and let Steinitz demonstrate his astonishing conclusion to a group of amazed onlookers.

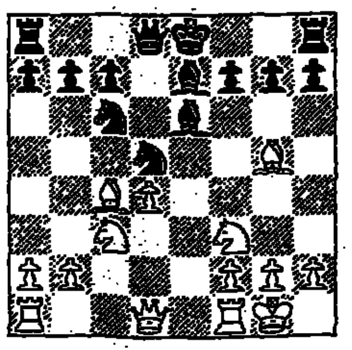
This is a game every chess *aficionado should know.*

White: Wilhelm Steinitz; Black: Von Bardeleben
Hastings 1895
Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6
3 Bc4 Bc5 4 c3 Nf6
5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 Bb4+
7 Nc3 d5?!

Avoiding the complexities of 7 ... Nxe4! 8 0-0 Bxc3 9 d5 which was terra incognita in 1895, but which modern theory regards as playable for Black.

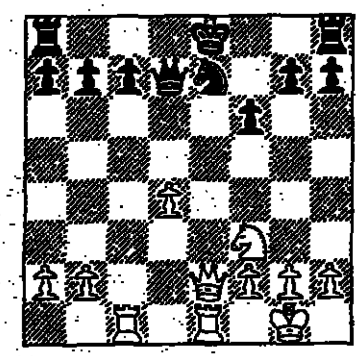
8 exd5 Nxd5 9 0-0 Be6
10 Bg5 Be7



11 Bxd5

An unexpected exchange, the point of which is to delay Black's castling.

11 ... Bxd5 12 Nxd5 Qxd5
13 Bxe7 Nxe7 14 Re1 f6
15 Qe2 Qd7 16 Rac1

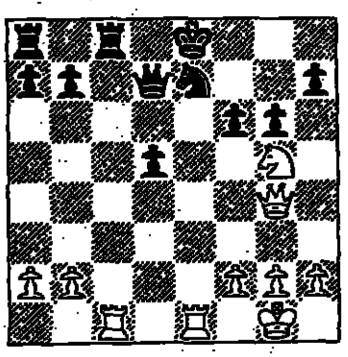


This is the critical position which has been closely analysed.

16 ... c6?

Black loses his nerve. Imperative was the cold-blooded defence 16 ... Kf7! to break the pin. In that case, Black has an equal position. Now, though, Steinitz launches a combination which impoverishes adjectival description.

17 d5! cxd5 18 Nd4 Kf7
19 Ne6 Rhc8 20 Qg4 g6
21 Ng5+ Ke8



22 Rxe7+! Kf8

The rook is immune, e.g. 22 ... Kxe7 23 Re1+ Kd6 24 Qb4+ Kc7 25 Ne6+ Kb8 26 Qf4+. But how is White to win with every piece en prise and Black threatening mate?

23 Rf7+! Kg8 24 Rg7+!
Black resigned

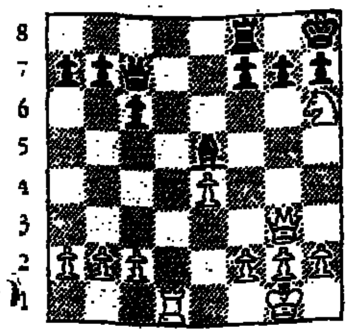
Mate is forced: 24 ... Kh8 25 Rxh7+ Kg8 26 Rg7+ Kh8 (26 ... Kf8 loses to 27 Nh7+) 27 Qh4+ Kxg7 28 Qh7+ Kf8 29 Qh8+ Ke7 30 Qg7+ Ke8 31 Qg8+ Ke7 32 Qf7+ Kd8 33 Qf8+ Qe8 34 Nf7+ Kd7 35 Qd6 checkmate. As commentators exclaimed: "Steinitz wound up this game with one of the *most beautiful and aesthetically* satisfying combinations ever devised on the chessboard."

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. *This position* is from the game Capablanca - Fonaroff, New York 1904.

José Capablanca was renowned as a brilliant strategist, but was also no slouch when it *came to tactical play. How did he* conclude here?



The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. Answers on a postcard please addressed to Winning Move competition, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's Christmas *competition*: The answer and winner's name will be published on January 17.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

AT THE annual Christmas outing of PANIC — Plump Analytical Nerds' Inner Circle — we got round to the subject of poor old Microsoft. We even toasted Bill Gates, who hadn't shown up, despite assurances from a woman Brains knows in the Virgin games department.

Bottle-Tops and Pointy Head raised the subject of Microsoft first, and they had a point. The charges regularly levelled against the bland yet powerful corporation are many and varied, but the ever-flying flak includes grumbles about the company's near monopoly over operating systems, such as Windows and its derivations.

It is time to stand up for Microsoft. There are other ways to conduct your computing affairs than by marching to the beat of this company's drum if you find *it dull*, but for novices the process can get messy, fragmented and confusing. *When it comes to computing for the* masses, Microsoft will go down as having done its bit.

It was the widespread adoption of Windows that helped to bring eagerly needed uniformity to an *industry which never stands still*. Alternatives may have been superior but, like Betamax video tapes *and multi-track audio cartridges*, a lot of good they are today.

IBM had laid the foundations of the *mass* computing industry, developing a standard PC which became the widely accepted norm. Today, the vast majority of computers sold are IBM or IBM-clone machines. Next came Microsoft with its bog-standard operating system and it was perfect, since bog-standard was what we in our millions, who *did not have science* degrees, required.

For the entire world to embrace *computing needed someone as* determined as Microsoft. Today in the home, Windows is what most of *us use. The alternative could mean* curtains for most modest computing ambitions.

I still use Windows 3.1 regularly, and find it has a pleasantly quaint feel. But Windows 95 was miles better. *Everything*, from deleting files to loading software, got easier and the whole process became more logical. Windows 98 is already being hailed as perhaps *the* computing event of next year.

"If anyone can understand what it actually adds to your machine," Pointy Head said.

Scrooge, the man who hated Christmas, inspires festive jokes

WHAT does Scrooge do in cold weather? He sits by a candle, of course. And what does Scrooge do *in very cold weather? He lights it!* That seasonal jape came courtesy of Matthew Shaw of Kilkenny, Ireland, *who was one of our* entrants in Cyberspace Thirty-Nine. Like hundreds more, he was after the chance for his family to be one of two to win £500 worth of Tiger Electronics goodies. The standard was exceedingly high and judging was difficult. Matthew can count himself unlucky to be unrewarded in such a generous manner. As can another entrant, Polly Silk in Oxford, who sent in this:

"What happened to the girl who ate the Christmas decorations?"

"She got tinselitis!"

Charles Reston of Frodsham, Cheshire, is our first winner for this knock, knock joke:

"Knock, Knock."

"Who's there?"

"Christmas Bigiss."

"Christmas Bigiss Who?"

"No thanks, mate!"

The second winner is Daniel Fisk of Basildon, Essex, for this lyrical entry:

"Was Christmas Day in the cook house,

Everything was neat and tidy.

The lads were eating hot-cross buns

Hang on, must have been Good Friday!"

Congratulations to Charles and *Daniel and commiserations to* their families who will now find it hard to get a minute's peace in 1998. *The identical prize sacks include a* "game.com" handheld games console, child's laptop computer, Laser *Tag zappers, junior electronic* organiser, Batman & Robin walkie talkies, Hercules and Lost World *LCD games, voice changers and*, for good measure, a Giga Pet.

Since it is Christmas, even our *honourable mentions* Matthew Shaw and Charles Reston will also be getting prizes. They will each receive, with our best wishes, a "game-com" console. Thank you to all who entered.

However, in the spirit of the season no one goes away empty-handed. A special message for you is waiting in cyberspace at `http://christmas.uk.com/xmascards/882504202ECYB.html`. If you like the idea, you can copy it and send variations to others!

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Answers from page 26

1. no lights on Christmas tree
2. car facing forwards 3. chimney
4. tow-truck 5. holly berries
6. snowball 7. snowman's hat
8. snowman's pipe 9. snowman's nose 10. snowman's scarf 11. boy's gloves 12. button in boy's left hand
13. footprints 14. sled-rider's hat
15. signature

WORD ANSWERS

Answers from page 26

SKIDOO
(b) To go away, leave or depart *hurriedly. Origin uncertain, perhaps* from *skedaddle*.

WAPPIE
(a) A gambling game played with cards in the West Indies.

WITBLITS
(b) Home-brewed brandy, *a strong* and colourless raw spirit. Afrikaans from the Dutch *wit* white + German *blitz* lightning.

TAUNTON TURKEY
(a) *Taunton* is a harbour in Massachusetts. A *Taunton Turkey* is the ale-wife. *Pomodorus pseudoharengus*, a fish resembling a herring found in marine or fresh water in eastern North America.

CLUES

Answers from page 26

Titan, alignment, Malachi, David, stag party, Notre Dame

NEW SOFTWARE

FINALLY the smoothest guy at the BBC gets to front his own CD-Rom. Result is a stylish sports quiz hosted by the King of Cool himself, Desmond Lynam.

Making glorious use of the *BBC's* sports archives, *all* the questions are based around authentic commentaries from actual *events. For one question you might* hear vintage radio clips of notable events such as historic horse races or football matches. For another you get a photograph or perhaps real footage to identify.

This is a slick product from BBC Multimedia. There are more than 3,000 questions in the database. To cover 37 years of television sport, from 1960 to 1997, there are 100 video clips, 100 audio extracts and 200 still photographs. Questions are presented in a variety of ways: such as multiple choices, spot-the-balls, scrambled pictures and even "What happened next?" numbers.

But the real star of the title is Des, who has a dry way with words. His voiceover links keep the quiz rolling along at a comfortable pace. Pick a correct answer and you can almost sense *him* winking at you. But offer a wrong answer and he chimes in with: "Not in my book."

At the end of every round Des announces: "Well, you can make what you want of that round. Let's see what the scores are saying!"

■ **Verdict: 9 out of 10. Must-have sports quiz fronted by Des Lynam. £29.99.**

GAMES for the Nintendo 64 so far appearing in Britain have tended to be on the cute side, loaded with primary colours and perky little characters. *GoldenEye 007* came along just in time to prove that

Des Lynam asks the questions

great adult gaming can also come in N64 bundles. Alas, the same cannot be said of **Lamborghini**.

Up to four simultaneously race Lamborghini Diablos on six easy or tricky courses in four racing styles. You can pick the colour of your car and opt for either automatic or manual gears. While the cars hold the road very well, they lack any hint of pep. Even by crunching through manual gears you will find it impossible to get any real sensation of speed, which is a rather unfortunate omission for a title exclusive to "the world's most powerful games console".

The backgrounds are not very detailed nor, being mainly a mix of grey hues, are they remotely appealing. The cars look reasonable and there are a few tricks to the action which are momentarily entertaining, such as making pit stops for a change of tyres. But once again, here is a woefully inadequate racer which doesn't have half of the style, grace or choices of the superlative *Need For Speed* and *Need For Speed II*, both already worthy stars on other formats.

■ **Verdict: 4 out of 10. Miserable, underperforming racing game. £54.99.**

SOLUTION TO JUMBO CROSSWORD 140

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T	O	N	U	P		S	T	A	G	N	A	T	E		S	E	X	T	O	N	B	E	E	T	L	E

The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, is M.R. Bickmore, of Highcliffe, Dorset

هكذا من الأصل

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q **For the past two years, I have found myself increasingly irritated by the poor table manners of my man-friend. I have never said anything to him, but I avoid inviting him to meals with friends and feel embarrassed when we are in a restaurant. He eats noisily, with loud slopping and swallowing sounds. He eats with his mouth open, occasionally spraying out debris. He talks constantly with his mouth full (and open, of course). He puts a teaspoon into his full cup of tea and leaves it there while he drinks. He covers every meal (without even tasting it) in criss-cross lines of both brown sauce and tomato ketchup — asking for these whatever the meal, venue or occasion. His tastes are unsophisticated, consisting mainly of hamburgers and biscuits. There is an enormous list of foods he will not touch and which he loudly denounces and picks out of dishes. Apart from this, he is a genuine man — a sort of rough diamond. Before I bale out in self-defence, how could I broach this without offending him? It is a social drawback of which he seems completely unaware.** — Name and address withheld.

A It is time for a new year resolution. Gently suggest that when people are together for a while, their habits often begin to irritate. Invite him to write down all the things you do that annoy him, and offer to make amends in the coming year. This leaves you free to return the compliment by listing his litany of frightening misdemeanours.

Q **Although I left a previous village several years ago, neighbours I hardly knew persist in sending me a Christmas card each year, which I have to reciprocate not wishing to hurt or be rude. Since I hardly remember them, I feel this is all becoming rather stupid. In the circumstances, what should I do?** — E. Joyce, Clonmel, Co Tipperary.

A The polite thing to do is to reciprocate *ad infinitum*. Many people do edit their Christmas card list, but the only way to achieve this is to cease sending. Eventually the other party will get the message, although your conscience may take longer to salve.

Q **When invited out for a meal with friends, should you take a gift? If so, what: wine, flowers and/or chocolates? Twenty-five years ago, it didn't occur to us to take anything. Then it became the norm in some circles and not in others.** — Lady Napier of Magdala, Marlborough, Wiltshire.

A Contrary to common belief, it is not always advisable to take a present when dining with friends. It is a relatively new transatlantic custom that can sometimes cause offence, particularly among older people. It remains a solecism to take a present to a formal dinner party, but in most other circumstances, a gift is usually welcome. But what? Wine is only suitable for casual suppers, and even flowers provide extra work for hosts at an invariably busy time. Opt instead for something small and exquisite, such as a box of superb chocolates, *marrons glacés* or sugared almonds.

Q **Contagious skin diseases and polar winter conditions excepted, is it not ill-mannered for a man to shake hands with his gloves on? I was saying goodbye to someone recently and he stuck out a trendy trekking-gloved hand. I'm afraid I shook it.** — Osbert Loader, Leatherhead, Surrey.

A I would offer my hand (not to do so is rude) after rapidly removing my glove while quietly hoping that the other man would learn from my example.

Q **When escorting a lady, I find myself in a bit of a spin if confronted by a revolving door. Is it a matter of "ladies first", or does etiquette decree otherwise?** — David Edwards, Southsea, Hants.

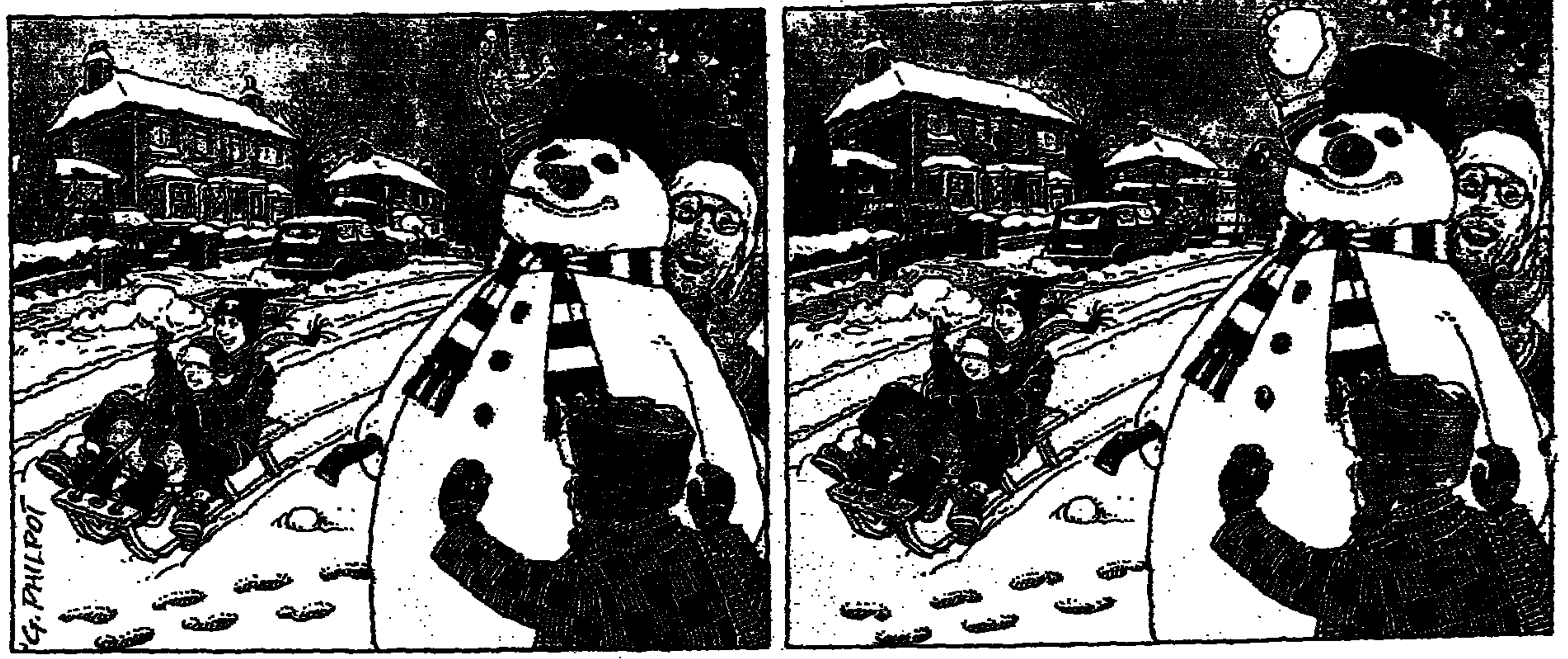
A Etiquette once decreed that a man should enter a revolving door first in order to turn it and thus enable the woman to use it effortlessly. Unfortunately, this also meant that the man had to go around twice to allow his female companion to emerge first. Nowadays, such courtly complexities are redundant, and it is simply a matter of "ladies first".

Q **While dining with chums, I mentioned that I was to employ the local "house" artist to do a pen and ink picture of my old house. "It's not for the headed paper," I said, "because that's too naff." One of my guests, who considers himself pretty smart, said: "Oh, I have a picture of my house on my paper." I had never had a letter from him and didn't know where to put myself. What should I do?** — Name and address withheld.

A Your friend is not alone. Some genuinely smart people do boast such a device on their writing paper. This practice has quite a long tradition and is acceptable. Unfortunately, the results are often very questionable and can range from the incredibly smart to the unbelievably naff. The deciding factors are always the distinction of both the artist and the property — and, of course, the taste of the owner.

● *John Morgan is associate editor of GQ*

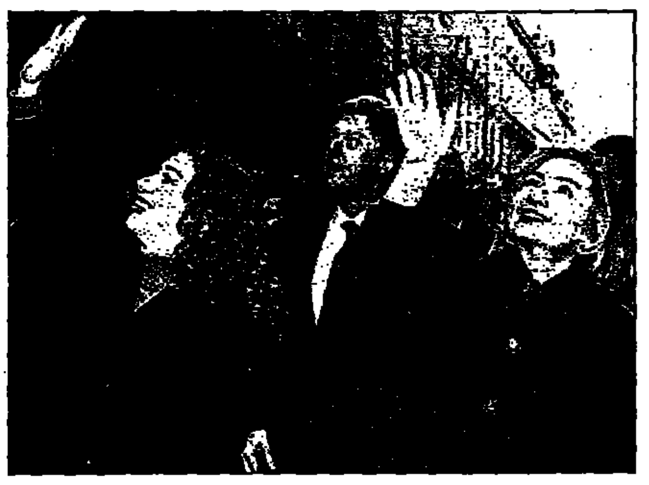
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



There are 15 discrepancies between the two drawings above. Can you spot them? Answers on page 25

Dan Blair has been grounded until the new year

PICTURE LINE



READERS are invited to suggest what Chelsea, Bill and Hillary Clinton might be saying.

This picture will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted. Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN. The closing date is Jan 5.

The Christmas Pictureline winner will be published next week.

CROSS WORDS

I *think it* was Miles Kington who suggested that the motto of the French Naval Academy might be "To the water — the hour has come!" i.e. "A l'eau, c'est l'heure". Against Dryden's description of puns as "the lowest and most grovelling form of wit", we may set Fowler's "the assumption that puns are *per se* contemptible . . . is a sign at once of sheepish docility and desire to seem superior".

Puns include ambiguity based on distinct meanings of the same word (polysemy) or of similar-sounding words (homophony). A clue exploiting homophony combines definitions of the answer and a homophone of it with an indication of the identity of the sound, as in: **Particularly powerful man said to strengthen hold (5)**. Here, a word meaning "to strengthen hold" is *said* in such a way that it sounds like a word meaning "particularly powerful man".

Sometimes a combination of homophones is possible, as in: **Arranging to have one kind of product imported, say (9)**. Homophony may also be used within the clue as in **Profit, so to speak, from maximal achievement (7)**. Here the definition is "prophet". Heteronymns, words spelt the same way but pronounced differently, can also form the basis of a clue, as in **French artist who's a saint? Doesn't sound like it! (5)**. Making ingenious use of a well disguised heteronym is **A chap could attend this celebration, but never does? (4,5)**. The most full-blooded pun in a crossword clue is: **I'll cite insane pronouncement locating this building (5,4)**.

BRIAN GREER

● *Clue answers on page 25*

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

SKIDOO
a. An Icelandic sleigh
b. To quit
c. A whaler's knot

WAPPIE
a. A gambling game
b. Chewing tobacco
c. A Welsh Australian

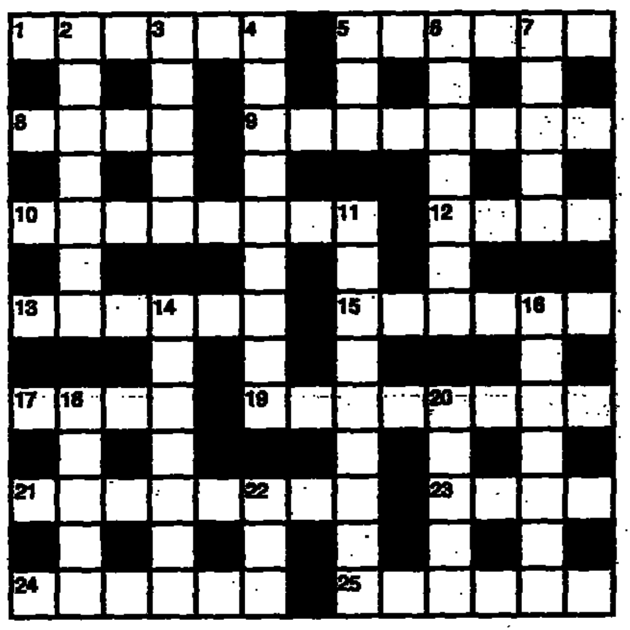
WITBLITS
a. Offal
b. Brandy
c. "Gorblimey!"

TAUNTON TURKEY
a. A sort of herring
b. A square dance
c. A scapegoat

Answers on page 25

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1287



ACROSS
1 Disorientation after flight (3,3)
5 Gesturing; curving (6)
8 Tartan skirt (4)
9 "The — of America is —" (*Coolidge*) (8)
10 Lay up (for disuse) (8)
12 Underworld river (4)
13 Fanatic (6)
15 High point of heavens (6)
17 Panel game (4)
19 Refutation (8)
21 Nagging old woman (8)
23 Formal test (4)
24 An island; a pullover (6)
25 Asphyxiate; suppress (6)

DOWN
2 One programme of series(7)
3 Door fastener (5)
4 The Rock (9)
5 Used to be; looked (*rev.*) (3)
6 Deer meat (7)
7 Unpleasant (5)
11 Idle person (9)
14 Beggar Dives spurned; one resurrected (7)
16 Hard labour (7)
18 Tsarist edict (5)
20 Rome coin-throwing fountain (5)
22 Barren; tedious (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 1286
ACROSS: 1 Feather 5 Limbs 8 Gulag 9 Cruiser 10 Yesterday 12 Lea 13 Welter 14 Bantam 17 Ram 18 Hairpiece 20 Annelid 21 Rifle 23 Heavy 24 Essayed.
DOWN: 1 Figgy 2 All 3 Hygiene 4 Recede 5 Lousy 6 Mistletoe 7 Sarcasm 11 Salamanca 13 Warpath 15 Aspires 16 Middle 18 Holly 19 Emend 22 Fly

TWO BRAINS

THANK you to the numerous readers who have written in with comments and suggestions about this column. In particular, thanks to: Joyce Williams of Hertfordshire, Dr A. Lynch of Potters Bar and David Hannon of Loughton, three among the many who wrote in to point out that after the sequence 3, 4, 6, 12, 36 (November 22), the answer 156 is a justifiable alternative to 216. I continue to welcome ideas and suggestions from readers.

Question 1:
Why is this a Christmas greeting? ABCDEFGHI JKMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Question 2:
What substance is denoted here?
HIJKLMNO

Answers on page 25

RAYMOND KEENE

ACROSS
1 Acting to combine all objectives, as hobby takes its toll? (4,3,4,5)
9 Native blood group not hitherto seen (10)
16 Research community given crank's piece for reassessment (7,4)
17 Management's disciplinary measure — result of bad hair day? (4-3)
18 Sort of metal fastener securing bank (3-4)
19 Various boats free to accommodate those people in certain quarters (6,3,4)
20 Assembly members running in parallel won't be (7)
21 Culture displayed by Elizabeth ostentatiously (5)
22 A French author twitching, not able to produce verse (8)
24 That hurts, being put in undecorated carriage (8)
26 Country festival — upper-class mate ragged in it? (9)
29 Clearing what may be not half painful? (9)
30 Classification of a particular weed brings great honour to Scot (5,2,3,7)
31 Ecstatic utterance reaching a maximum in song tune is wild (8,2,7)
34 Courts backing support for homeland (3,6)
36 It's difficult to include a pair of opposing points in offical record (7)
38 Like part of computer needing to be put back on track (3-4)
40 Politician in debate, terribly embarrassed and angry (3-8)
44 One may go on foot, catering for expedition (6-5)
45 Characters providing correspondence (7)
46 A word of thanks in tribe's language (7)
47 Like one flapping round personage, get excited no end (9)
51 General Montcalm failed to be such a dog! (8,9)
54 Bit of microelectronics set in silicon initially (10,7)
57 Like an interval for musicians in which drink's on the house (9)
60 Nowhere near city centre? On the contrary (3,4,2)
61 See Frenchman escape, returning for a beer (8)
62 That girl kept in employment by ship as attendant (8)
64 Marriage may be tricky for nun I love! (5)
66 Take a course, while others have to wait (4,3)
68 Almost too late to make sharp sort of appeal before penalty (7,2,4)
70 US reforms offering something fresh after shuffling at table (3,4)
71 Woman's outfit said to be covered in hair (7)
72 A jaguar on the loose has a boy taken aback in city (11)
73 Members of the aristocracy try to win favour in area of London (5,5)
74 Doorman at front of establishment takes out meat (11,5)

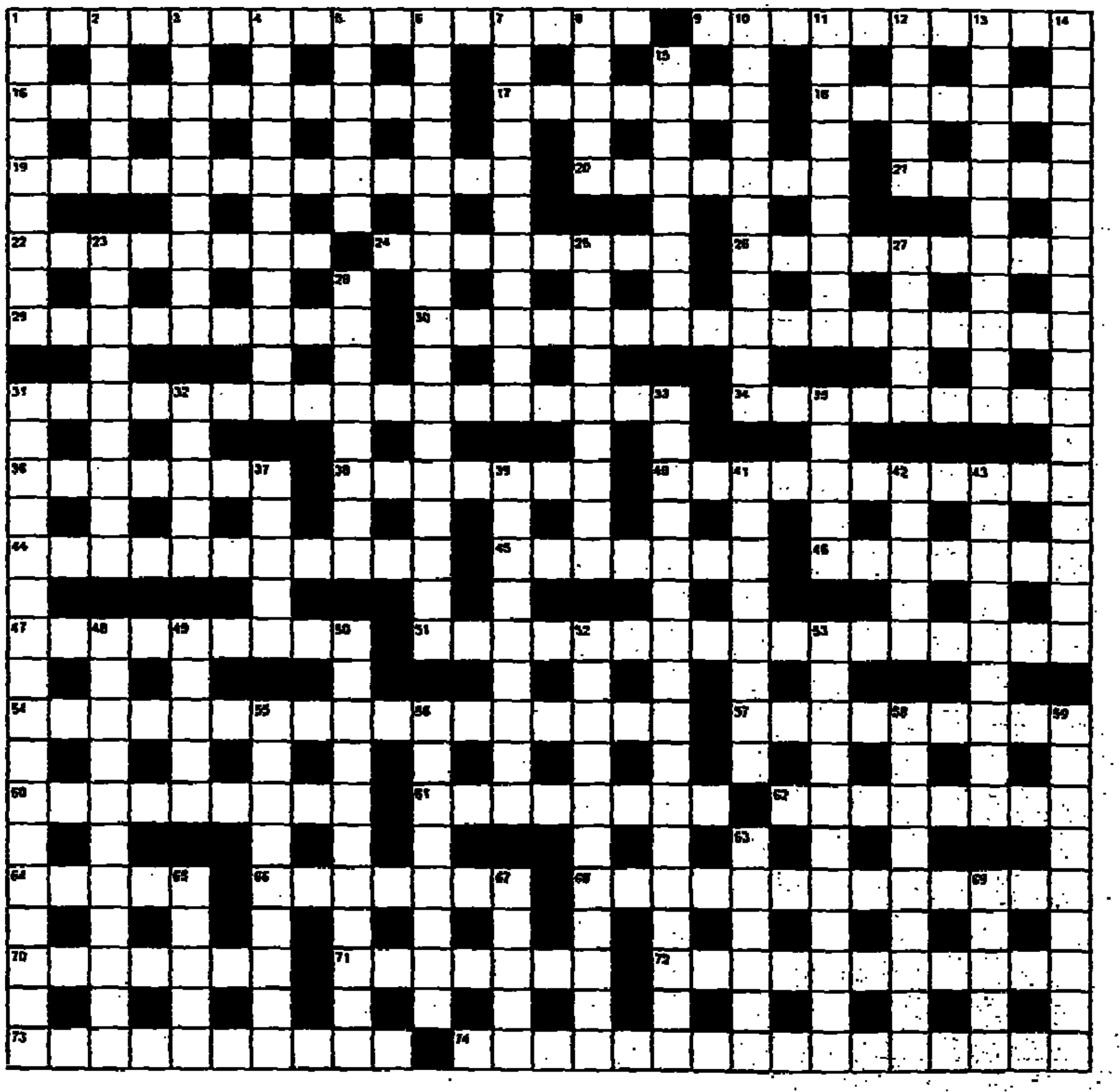
DOWN
1 Mae obliged to be heading the same way as a young man? (9)
2 The female harbouring one criminal (5)
3 In such a state, facing the possibilty of repossession? (9)
4 One into client care harassed installation engineer (11)
5 Lady with little girl in hard-wearing coat (6)
6 Very quickly describing a striker who's escaped nasty experience (4,1,3,3,2,4)
7 Rambled on and on and on? (4-7)
8 Philosopher and officer on university river (5)
10 People absorbing races may have endless expectation here (7,4)
11 Offensive, turning up to interrupt ruling (9)
12 Musician's booking — superior oriental dance (5)
13 Wind disturbed hornet on flowering plant (5-6)
14 Ha-ha — my work may end here! (9,8)
15 Unable to take account of the state of the pitch (4-4)
23 A plant — one ruddy hard to find? (9)
25 Fat uncle drunk with port (9)
27 What's kept in border I call a shrub (5)
28 Roman general and one lesser officer invading Indian city (8)
31 Astrologer may see planet as such where individual is in control (6,2,9)
32 The church's part in declaring one wicked (5)
33 Old big cat — he'd get to roar best, I fancy (5-7,5)
35 Type of acid made a hole — I can't see what's in it (5)
37 Dance club lacking harmony — half leaving (5)
39 I will be right almost completely, restraining one that's narrow-minded (9)
41 Be suspicious about little woman on street with brown coat (8)
42 Cherubic youngsters playing on the green — last two to go (5)
43 Article in fantastically clever English keeping to the point(9)
48 Person with questions stirred inert TV fan (11)
49 It could be boring physicist, having a certain effect (5)
50 Female on ship, it's muttered, wanted emergency security for it (5,6)
52 Mark a grave? No (5,6)
53 Audible indications of the enemy's progress (4,7)
55 Mammal, running amok, entering a stream with duck (9)
56 Copper and lead items that are 'idden in a piece of furniture (8)
58 More that one amphibian walks nursing broken toe (4,5)
59 Class distinction spotted in India? (5,4)
63 Tough lady? Little one to tease, then love (6)
65 Edmund's collecting last of the requirements (5)
67 See one end of the country (5)
69 Children animated — not completely turning stupid (5)

FESTIVE JUMBO CROSSWORD 143

Champagne
MOËT & CHANDON

Win a Methuselah of *Moët & Chandon* champagne and an Alfred Dunhill AD2000. The closing date is January 22, 1998. *Send entries to:* Festive Jumbo Crossword 143, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Winners will be published on January 24.

ALFRED DUNHILL
LONDON



NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

.... POSTCODE ....

TIMES TWO

Festive Jumbo

There are no prizes for this crossword. The answers will be published on January 6, 1998

ACROSS
1 Take subordinate role (4,6,6)
9 Air behind moving car, plane (10)
16 Flying dinosaur (11)
17 Clique (2-5)
18 Accuses without proof (7)
19 In tactless way (13)
20 Check (newspaper copy) (7)
21 Juan —, Argentine dictator (5)
22 Eg Brent babies (8)
24 Atmosphere (of place) (8)
26 Special advantage (9)
29 Cheap toys; new discoveries (9)
30 Prepare for (hard, messy) work (4,2,4,7)
31 Make superficial inroads (7,3,7)
34 Concert, lecture halls (9)
36 Left out (7)
38 Moving to music (7)
40 Gobsmacked (11)
44 Wife of Richard III (4,7)
45 One learning the ropes (7)
46 Usable from car (5-2)
47 *Jane Eyre* hero (9)
51 Be impatiently idle (7,4,6)
54 Small executive team (8,9)
57 Textiles (4,5)
60 Fiddling with (equipment) (9)
61 (US) legislature (8)
62 High (heel) (8)
64 Banishment (5)
66 One from Port-au-Prince (7)
68 One grown from same ovum (9,4)
70 Colombia/Venezuela border river (7)
71 Resistance to movement (7)
72 With mind elsewhere (11)
73 One on finger with seal (6,4)
74 (Plant) converted solar energy (16)

DOWN
1 Visiting briefly (7,2)
2 Helps (criminal) (5)
3 Flat-beaked wader (9)
4 Food-warmer (7,4)
5 Silly fellow (*colloq.*) (6)
6 Illegal deprivation of liberty (5,12)
7 Eponymous H James heroine (5,6)
8 Nigerian port (5)
10 Butterfly order (11)
11 Banana-like fruits (9)
12 Bell-shaped spring flower (5)
13 Very keen person (5,6)
14 Wrong-end-of-stick situations (17)
15 Mexican wide hat (8)
23 Ruler; a coin (9)
25 Severe pain in nerve (9)
27 That is (*Lat.*) (2,3)
28 Elysian Fields plant; sort of lily (8)
31 Warning fire (esp. at sea) (4,6,3,4)
32 Giant; Saturn moon (5)
33 Creatures almost extinct (10,7)
35 SW Welsh county (recently) (5)
37 Turf displaced (5)
39 Sixth sense (9)
41 Docility (8)
42 David coveted his wife (*II Sam.*); — Heep (5)
43 Attractive person (*slang*) (9)
48 Opposite of *debauchery* (5,6)
49 Uncanny (5)
50 Acknowledgment (11)
52 Decisive factor; matrix product (*maths*) (11)
53 Lock on gun (6,5)
55 One close by (9)
56 Cut at eg lathe (8)
58 Seaside course (4,5)
59 Supply in tiny, easy stages (9)
63 Melody; filter (6)
65 Arouse, elicit (5)
67 V-shaped nick (5)
69 Lingers; old carol singers (5)

هكذا من الأصل

UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

CUP UPSET
England's women down and out in Madras
PAGE 34

LION IN WINTER
John Bentley takes wing
PAGE 30

OPEN FOR BUSINESS
A surprise winner of the King George
PAGE 32

WEEKEND MONEY
Why banks come bottom of the Tessa league
PAGE 48

go
How to build a Ferrari from spare parts
PAGE 35

THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT

DECEMBER 27 1997

CHAMPIONS OPEN SIX-POINT LEAD AT THE TOP

Cole's team-mates rush to catch him and join in the celebrations after the United striker's brilliant goal against Everton at Old Trafford yesterday. Photograph: Dan Chung

Ferguson enjoys a swift half

MANCHESTER UNITED 2
EVERTON 0

By Oliver Holt
Football Correspondent

FROM the first to the last, it was a stroll. At times, it was an exercise in over-elaboration, at others it was careless, even sloppy. But there was great beauty amid the indolence, too, enough for Manchester United to make this FA Carling Premiership match against Everton look like an uneven battle between men and boys. The first half of the season over, they are on the home stretch now and coasting.

To emphasise just how rich their reserves are, Alex Ferguson, the United manager, left Teddy Sheringham and Ryan Giggs on the substitutes' bench yesterday and sent Peter Schmeichel home as a precaution when he could have played and used in his stead the club's third-string goalkeeper. It did not matter a jot. They took Howard Kendall's struggling team apart in the first half, then sat back and conserved their energy for the rest of the festive programme.

If United's first goal was a scramble, a point-blank header from Berg after Beckham's corner had been nodded back across goal by Johnsen, the second was worth the admission money on its own. Cole, growing in confidence with every game, chipped Myhre from 30 yards. It had Ferguson reminiscing about some of the glorious touches of Cantona.

And no matter how modest the victory — their sixth successive win in the FA Carling Premiership — might have been, it took United into an even more commanding lead at the top of the table. Four points clear yesterday morning, they were six points clear by the end of the day.

"It was an embarrassing 90 minutes," Kendall, the Everton manager, said afterwards. "It was men against boys. The scoreline flatters us. No one expected us to come here and get a result, but I was disappointed with the way we played. It might be Christmas, but Manchester United have had two days off. They just had Boxing Day off as well as Christmas Day. It was a long, long 90 minutes for us."

In the first half, United, and Beckham in particular, were unstoppable. Their dominance was so crushing that Everton did not manage a shot on target until the 56th minute, and that was an ambitious long-range effort from Farrelly that did not trouble Pilkington, the United goalkeeper.

United sliced through the Everton defence for the first time in the fourth minute, when Beckham's pass and Gary Neville's run left Hinchcliffe stranded. Butt could only sidefoot Neville's cross wide, but within ten minutes United had eased into the lead, Barrett making a hash of clearing Johnsen's header and Berg guiding it over the line.

That was the cue for an avalanche of chances. United hardly gave Everton a touch as they spread the ball confidently around midfield, Beckham always at the centre of things, but ably abetted by Johnsen, whose surges forward were a constant source of embarrassment to Everton, who are now just two points ahead of Barnsley at the foot of the table.

A minute after Berg's goal, Solskjaer ran on to a pass from Beckham and curled a centre into the box. Scholes hooked it acrobatically towards goal and Myhre, the Norwegian goalkeeper, who has hastened Neville Southall's exit from the club, reacted superbly to push it over the crossbar.

Then Beckham should have had a goal as a reward for his creativity. Beating the Everton offside trap with ease, he ran on to a ball from Butt, ignored Solskjaer in the centre and lifted his shot over Myhre. It appeared to be heading for the back of the net, but clipped the top of the crossbar instead.

United went close again after 20 minutes when Beckham, with time and space on the right-hand side of the Everton penalty area, chipped the ball to the back post, where Solskjaer nodded it back for Cole. Cole's shot was blocked and when Solskjaer retrieved it and had another go, more Everton bodies hurled themselves in his path and cleared the danger.

The best move of the match saw Solskjaer cross to Beckham, who nodded the ball on for Cole to tap over the line. It was disallowed for offside but, ten minutes before half-time, Cole scored legitimately, receiving the ball from Butt 30 yards out, looking up as he moved slightly to his right and then drifting a chip over the stranded goalkeeper. It was vintage stuff.

The second half was tame in comparison, but United had the match won by then. "We did not make it a helter-skelter game in the second half," Ferguson said, acknowledging his understatement with a wry smile. "We need to conserve our energy. Still, it was not a bad day for us."

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-2): K Pilkington — G Neville, G Pallister (sub: B McClair, 72min), H Berg, P Neville (sub: J Curtis, 82) — D Beckham (sub: K Poborsky, 66), R Johnsen, P Scholes, N Butt — A Cole, O G Solskjaer
EVERTON (3-5-2): T Myhre — C Short, D Watson (sub: F Jeffers, 46), C Tiler — E Barrett (sub: G Allen, 65), M Ball (sub: C Thomsen, 77), G Farrelly, J Oster, A Hinchcliffe — D Cadamarteri, N Barmby
Referee: U Rennie

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	20	14	4	2	47	13	46
Blackburn	20	11	7	2	36	19	40
Chelsea	20	12	3	5	46	20	39
Liverpool	19	10	4	5	34	18	34
Leeds	20	10	4	6	29	22	34
Arsenal	19	9	6	4	34	22	33
Derby	20	9	5	6	34	27	32
West Ham	20	9	1	10	26	31	28
Leicester	20	7	6	7	24	20	27
Newcastle	19	7	5	7	20	23	26
Aston Villa	20	7	4	9	24	26	25
Wimbledon	19	6	6	7	20	22	24
Crystal Palace	20	5	7	8	18	26	22
Sheff Wed	20	6	4	10	31	43	22
Southampton	20	6	3	11	24	30	21
Bolton	20	4	9	7	17	30	21
Coventry	20	4	8	8	17	26	20
Tottenham	20	5	4	11	18	36	19
Everton	20	4	5	11	17	29	17
Barnsley	20	4	3	13	18	51	15

Collymore double, page 26
Chelsea falter, page 27
Brian Glanville, page 28
Forest on fire, page 29

Left cold by Boxing Day outing with no clout

LYNNE TRUSS

Even when I knew nothing of football, the idea of the Boxing Day fixture held a certain fascination. Why would people eschew cosy firesides, hot figgy pudding and boxes of chocs to spend 90 minutes in a draughty stadium with a lot of people swearing, and not a stick of tinsel? Football must indeed be grandy and dandy, if it could countermand natural hearthside instincts as rich and potent as the Christmas hols. Boxing Day matches must be a real knees-up. Free tickets, perhaps. Mulled Fosters. Burgers with holly in. Mounted police singing carols at half-time.

So it was a bit of a shock to witness the demoralising 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge yesterday between Chelsea and Wimbledon. It was one of those rare occasions when the attractions of live sport appear completely mysterious. It didn't help that my £21 seat was in the unfinished West Stand (no roof), with a gigantic floodlight pole blocking part of the view. It also didn't help that a juvenile Chelsea supporter sitting immediately behind me kept voicing precocious opinions that, dammit, I reluctantly agreed with. ("Anyone would think De Goey had had his foot amputated," he piped, "so rarely does he kick.") Had the football been good, no discomfort would have mattered. But it's a mark of how abysmal the football was that I got my main pleasure in the match vindictively from standing up and shouting "Come on Chelsea!" on every pretext — just to block the kiddie's view with my enormous bulk and thereby spoil his day.

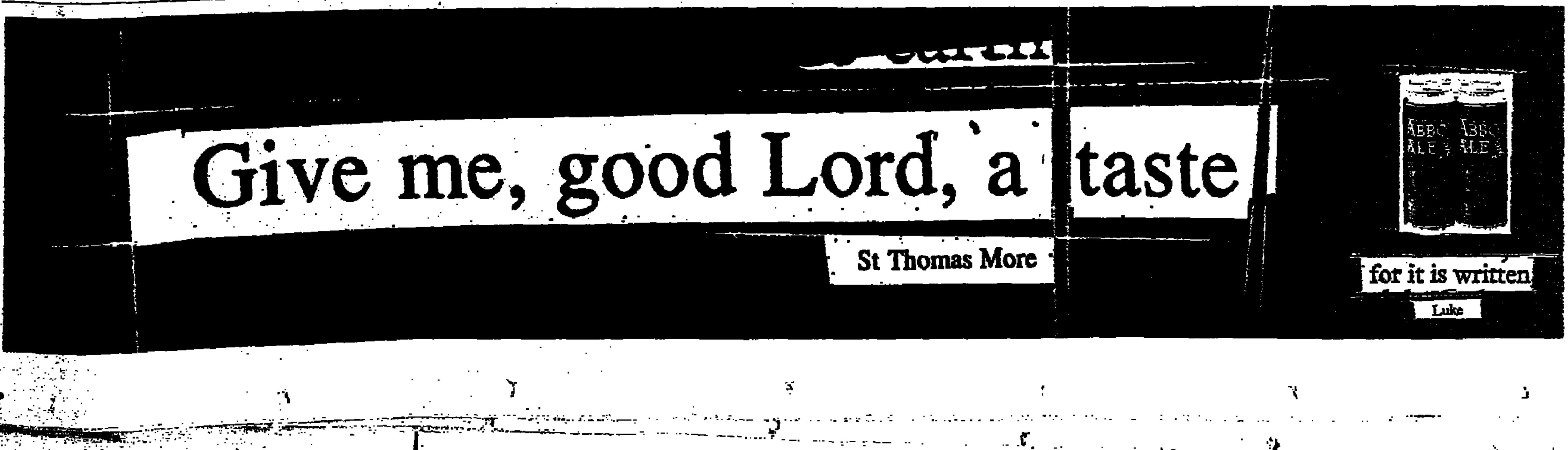
This was a very, very sluggish match. Too much festive panettone had evidently been consumed by those Italians; too much Bailey's by the others. Until Zola came on, midway through the second half, there was a hesitant quality to Chelsea's game that drove the fans to distraction. "Pass the ball!" they pleaded. "Kick the ball!" "Aim for the goal! Go for it!" All pretty basic imperatives, you might think; but the Chelsea boys were not so sure any more. They held back, as if perpetually worried about what was required. "I'll go forward if you will." "OK." "OK what?" "Sorry, did he say OK? Are *you* going forward?" "Um, are you?" "I think Frank is."

Meanwhile, Wimbledon have changed a lot since I last saw them. They've lost their distinctive, unattractive long-ball game and replaced it with something technically known as dead boring. Though Joe Kinnear bawled instructions at his defence, he should have been pleased with the hard-won result. True, they conceded a silly goal, but the goal they scored was sillier. In fact the Wimbledon goal was a classic of Crazy Gang farce, with Chelsea's 'keeper Ed ("Clueless") de Goey inexplicably rushing out of his goal diagonally right, just as the ball shot in diagonally left. Comedy is all about timing, you know. All this goal needed was for De Goey's trousers to fall down as well.

"De Goey is just a liability," pronounced the child behind. And the four-eyes was right. Good grief, did De Goey need the loo, or something? Was he called to the phone? Either way, it's not something you see very often in the Premiership — a goalie apparently saying "Won't be a tick," when the ball is coming upfield towards him. Goalies almost never say "Won't be a tick," during a football match, Ed. It can be taken as an invitation to the other side.

'Good grief, did De Goey need the loo or something?'

So the Boxing Day fixture wasn't quite the Christmas present I'd expected, especially when it started raining (and I got wet). True, I'd seen Stamford Bridge for the first time, but I'd also spent 25 minutes in a queue for my tickets. My car got a parking ticket, in true festive manner. And when I got home, the cat had polished off the figgy pudding. I'm so glad I asserted my right to stand up repeatedly and ruin Top-of-the-Form's day out. It made this a Boxing Day to remember, after all.



Give me, good Lord, a taste
St Thomas More
for it is written
Luke

هكذا من الأصل

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Tottenham's failings exposed as defeat continues descent into relegation trouble

Collymore spurs Villa to emphatic victory

ASTON VILLA 4
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR 1

By Rob Hughes

Ginola, left, the Tottenham Hotspur forward, beats Scimeca in the air at Villa Park yesterday. Photograph: Mark Thompson/Allsport

TOTTENHAM Hotspur, sliding to their eighth defeat in 11 games, will need more than their ghost of Christmas past, Jürgen Klinsmann, to stop the dreadful free fall towards relegation. But Aston Villa, inevitably with their own enigma, Stan Collymore, erupting into potent and ultimately thrilling goal power, overwhelmed the London club yesterday and brought this magnificent Midlands bastion of the game back to full, throbbing enjoyment.

Whether Tottenham's dearest wish is for an ageing talisman, or whether indeed Klinsmann, with his wage of £35,000 a match, will only exacerbate any rifts in the camp, will be seen. Integrating him will be the problem for the new coach, Christian Gross, but David Pleat, who returns to White Hart Lane in the new year as director of football, said pointedly at half-time: "Our major problem is that we've no one holding the ball up in attack."

Klinsmann, though his goal ratio in half a season with Sampdoria is no better than Collymore's, no better than Ferdinand's, is certainly a man of control and thought, but yesterday the problems for Tottenham lay in all departments. Ginola was pouting from a distance, not served with the ball and, until told at the interval, not hungry enough to go in search of it. Thus, in that entire first half, did Tottenham create a solitary chance, a pinpoint cross from the right by Fox met in the air by Iversen, whose header was misdirected across the face of the goal.

Villa? Much, much better. Their front two, Collymore and Milosevic, each put in the effort, Milosevic running wide to the flanks, getting his head down and doggedly dribbling the ball infield, while Collymore lurked deep, shrugged those massive shoulders and attempted to find the way to the net from distance.

Collymore, seemingly unperturbed by the police charge that he assaulted the mother of his two-year-old son, Thomas, on Christmas Eve, attempted to beat Walker with right and left foot from 25 yards. The first dropped over the bar, the second was two feet wide, but this was Collymore chancing his arm with the lust for goal that made his reputation with Nottingham Forest.

There was bite in the game, too, with first Mabbutt needing treatment for a head wound, then Sinton being taken off on a stretcher after being caught from behind by Draper. Mabbutt recovered, but almost scored in his own net while desperately trying to dispossess Milosevic, obliging Walker to make a dramatic left-handed save at the foot of the post.

The huge, capacity Villa Park crowd finally erupted in the 38th minute. Staunton, the outstanding Villa player yet again, launched the classic counter-attack. His left foot is unquestionably one of the best in the FA Carling Premiership, his vision is sometimes beyond the scope of others. He demonstrated both when, from wide on the left in his own half, he released the ball diagonally towards the far right.

Milosevic was given the time and room to collect it and, with his own left foot, punished Tottenham for simply backing off him, producing an inviting centre. Draper timed his run perfectly. Carr was ineffectual in the air and Draper's header squirmed beneath the grasp of Walker. It was Draper's second goal of the season and before he could make it three a tepid match had erupted into controversial life.

It was the ineptitude of the referee, Alan Wilkie, that awoke the passions. In the 59th minute he handed, literally, an equaliser to the Londoners and then compounded that by denying Villa a penalty when Carr had handled the ball, falling backwards into the area. Wilkie gave only a free kick.

First, the equaliser. Fox, with a sharp volley, drew an elastic save from Bosnich, but when the ball was driven back into the area, it clearly struck the hand of Calderwood before dropping over the goalline. Wilkie refused all protestations and, in his own peculiar way, roused the game to fever pitch. In the 67th minute, driven forward, Collymore volleyed the ball up towards the crossbar. Walker was there, but collided with Neilsen as he stretched for the ball, dropped it, and Draper was poaching on the line.

Then, either side of Grayson striking the base of a Tottenham post, Collymore became the man. His first goal was simple, dabbed in when Grayson crossed low and accurate, though Collymore had won the right with his anticipation. His second goal, the glorious finale, was a free kick straight in from almost 22 yards with that old, imperious Collymore arrogance. Right-footed, struck with bend and venom, it eluded the groping hand of Walker into the top corner. Who needs penalties?

ASTON VILLA (3-5-2): M Bosnich — U Ehiogu, S Staunton, R Scimeca — F Nelson, M Draper, I Taylor, S Grayson, A Wright — S Milosevic, S Collymore.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (4-4-2): I Walker — S Carr, S Campbell, G Mabbutt (sub: R Allen, 74min), C Wilson (sub: D Anderton, 74) — R Fox, A Nielsen, C Calderwood, A Sinton (sub: S Clemence, 24) — D Ginola, S Iversen.

Referee: A Wilkie.

Newcastle reduced to hopeless pursuit

DERBY COUNTY 1
NEWCASTLE UNITED 0

By Neil Harman

THE frustration that comes when you are erased from the FA Carling Premiership equation dawned with a crushing impact on Newcastle United yesterday.

Newcastle end the year a full 20 points behind Manchester United — with Kenny Dalglish's managerial alma mater, Liverpool, to come to St James' Park tomorrow. How long respectability alone will placate the Toon Army remains to be seen.

This defeat leaves Newcastle with the grim realisation that they have collected a mere two points from a possible 18 and have failed to score in five of those six league games.

Derby, managed by the former Newcastle favourite, Jim Smith, are playing well enough to earn a place in Europe next season, one of only seven sides in the Premiership this morning to have accumulated 30 points or more. Smith has achieved this with an outlay of less than half the price of Alan Shearer.

Dalglish's team selection was puzzling, for John Barnes, the only man to have looked like scoring in recent matches, and the talismanic Colombian, Faustino Asprilla, were languishing on the substitutes' bench, replaced by the frail figure of the Denmark international, Jon Dahl Tomasson, and the veteran, Ian Rush.

Rush had failed to start in 11 previous matches after a knee operation and probably wished he had not started this one. He has been one of the game's truly great goalscorers, but his glittering career has now entered the twilight period. When Dalglish tempted him from Leeds in the summer, it appeared as though nostalgia had got the better of the man who used to play alongside him in the great Liverpool side of the 1980s. To see his old friend play in such a laboured fashion must have troubled the Newcastle manager. Dalglish has had enough troubles this season without one of his side's mainstays, the England midfield player, David Batty, foolishly getting himself sent off for the second time this season — and on the eve of a two-match suspension for five cautions.

Batty walked right into this red card, fouling Derby's Darryl Powell from behind when referee Mike Reed was in the middle of one of his more compulsive card-flashing moods. Paradoxically, Newcastle's reduction to 10 men, and the introduction of Asprilla and Temuri Ketsbaia for the labouring Rush and Tomasson, seemed to galvanise them. Not enough, however, to disturb a team which has kept three successive clean sheets.

The only goal of the game arrived after three minutes when Des Hamilton was adjudged, cruelly, in Dalglish's opinion, to have upended Dean Sturridge from behind when the forward was about to shoot. Television re-runs confirmed that Hamilton had not made contact. Stefano Eranio strolled up to beat Shaka Hislop and after that the game disintegrated into a series of feuds.

When Keith Gillespie attempted to take a quick free kick which struck Eranio standing two yards away, the Italian believed that Gillespie had kicked the ball at him deliberately.

Smith wisely took Eranio off at half-time. If he hadn't, Derby would have been the first team to be reduced to 10 men, so savage was his desire for retaliation.

The problems, though, are all Dalglish's. "Batty will have to take his punishment and the rest of us have to get on with it," said the Newcastle manager. "The penalty? He never touched him."

DERBY COUNTY (3-4-1-2): M Poom — G Rowett, I Stimac, D Yates — S Eranio (sub: J Laursen, 46min), D Powell, L Carsley, C Powell — F Baiano (sub: R Willems, 73) — D Sturridge (sub: D Burton, 86), P Wanchope.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (4-4-2): S Hislop — S Watson, S Howey (sub: J Barnes, 81), S Pearce, A Pistone — D Hamilton, D Batty, J Beresford, K Gillespie — J D Tomasson (sub: T Ketsbaia, 61), I Rush (sub: F Asprilla, 61).

Referee: M Reed.

Blackburn lose way in race to summit

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 0
BLACKBURN ROVERS 0

By Russell Kempson

IF THERE are any credible challengers for the FA Carling Premiership crown of Manchester United, it is becoming increasingly difficult to spot them. Blackburn Rovers, statistically, are the best-placed among the maybes and wannabes but, against Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough yesterday, they slipped farther behind in the chase to wrench the title away from Old Trafford.

Blackburn still occupy second place, with Roy Hodgson, their manager, having transformed the side since he arrived from Internazionale in June. Few predicted before the season that Rovers would be snapping at the heels of the Premiership pace-setters yet a six-point deficit, even with the halfway stage of the campaign barely passed, appears insurmountable.

"Lift the roof off for a feast of footy," the public-address announcer had urged continuously before the kick-off yesterday. On the front cover of the match programme, it was writ large: "With seven goals to avenge, the gloves are on for a Boxing Day rematch." Wednesday clearly felt the need to atone for their 7-2 humiliation at Ewood Park in August.

What was laid on, especially in the first half, was no more than earnest endeavour with a smattering of skill and the occasional goalmouth skirmish. Rudi, the rangy Norway midfield player, whose resemblance to Chris Waddle, the former England and Wednesday winger, is uncanny, produced a few nice touches; McKinlay offered balance and bite in the Blackburn midfield.

More, much more, was expected, though. Perhaps not from Wednesday, who are still in the infant stages of Ron Atkinson's influence as the manager, but certainly from Rovers. Pembridge may have headed off the line from Sherwood and Pressman did well to save Ripley's angled shot, but it was a poor return from an abundance of promising approach play. Wednesday had their moments, too, with Croft diverting Rudi's delightful lob against a post before the ball was scrambled to safety. Fettis, making his Rovers debut in goal in place of the unfit Flowers, also saved well from Pembridge and Carbone. It was enough to warm the hands, but hardly a feast.

Another half, another helping of indigestible festive fare. At least this time Rovers behaved in the manner of championship contenders, forcing the pace and exposing large gaps in the Wednesday defence. As the chances arrived, though, they were quickly squandered.

Sutton, on his return after suspension, was the chief culprit, dragging wide an attempt from Duff's cross and also shooting weakly at Pressman. When he did manage to get it right, with a dipping left-foot volley, Pressman made a marvellous, one-handed save.

Wednesday's response was honest but lacked guile. A touch more thought, particularly with Hendry experiencing one of his less commanding afternoons, and Blackburn could have been punished. Carbone should have done better than shoot against the goalkeeper when put through with only Fettis to beat, and Booth and Newsome wasted chances.

Towards the end, Rovers at last generated some passion. Sutton headed against Pembridge, who was stationed on the goalline for a corner from Wilcox, Sherwood's header, from another Wilcox corner, was ruled out for handball and Gallacher drove high over the crossbar. One point, when in pursuit of Manchester United, is simply not enough.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (4-4-2): K Pressman — I Nolan, D Walker, J Newsome, D Stefanovic (sub: W Collins, 68min) — N Alexandersson, P Atherton, P Rudi, M Pembridge — A Booth, B Carbone (sub: G Whittingham, 84).

BLACKBURN ROVERS (4-4-2): A Fettis — J Kenna, S Henchoz, C Hendry, G Croft — S Ripley (sub: G Flitcroft, 80), W McKinlay, T Sherwood, D Duff (sub: J Wilcox, 84) — C Sutton, K Gallacher.

Referee: J Winter.

Owen quick to let his feet do the talking

LIVERPOOL 3
LEEDS UNITED 1

By Matt Dickinson

IF Michael Owen is not the finished article, and one has no less than Glenn Hoddle's word for that, then Liverpool truly possess a player of prodigious gifts. The teenage striker, criticised by the England coach, has responded in spectacular fashion.

It is something when a player who turned 18 less than a fortnight ago can look the senior striker at a club that also boasts Robbie Fowler and Karlheinz Riedle, but Owen's display of pace and penetration at Anfield yesterday was of a kind that belies his tiny frame. Fowler may have outscored his young sidekick as Liverpool turned their domination against Leeds United into second-half goals, but it was Owen who caught the eye.

One way or another, Owen will be wearing an England shirt in France this summer. The Under-21s will be making their regular trip to the Toulon tournament, but on this form his skills deserve the greatest stage of all. Like Hoddle, Roy Evans is understandably keen to protect his young star, but his strike-rate makes resting him unthinkable. "Anybody that has pace like that is going to cause problems," the Liverpool manager said. "He is a threat all the time if we can get the ball behind the back four."

After some batterings earlier in the season, Owen is learning to take on the behemoths that inhabit FA Carling Premiership defences when he cannot hurtle away from them. He never shirked from the physical confrontation with Robert Molenaar, a man with arms bigger than the youngster's thighs, and on one memorable occasion gave the giant Leeds defender a five-yard start before cruising past like a Ferrari pulling away from a Capri at the lights.

All of Owen's efforts in the first half were not enough to break Leeds down, and with Ince and Hopkin clattering into each other in midfield there was plenty of heat but little light shed on whether either of these teams are potential championship challengers. Both are probably battling for the runners-up spot, but Liverpool have now won three on the trot for the first time in 18 months and, although McAteer and Kvarme had their usual moments of panic, they matched Leeds tackle for tackle. Enough said.

McAteer missed their best chance of the first half, but Liverpool needed only 55 seconds after the restart to take the lead. A long ball from Harkness appeared to carry little obvious threat until Molenaar collided with Roberston, his team-mate. Their confusion allowed Leonhardsen to knock the ball back to Owen, who lashed his shot unerringly into the corner for his tenth goal of the season. Leeds responded with typical fight, but, for the first time in weeks, that was not enough.

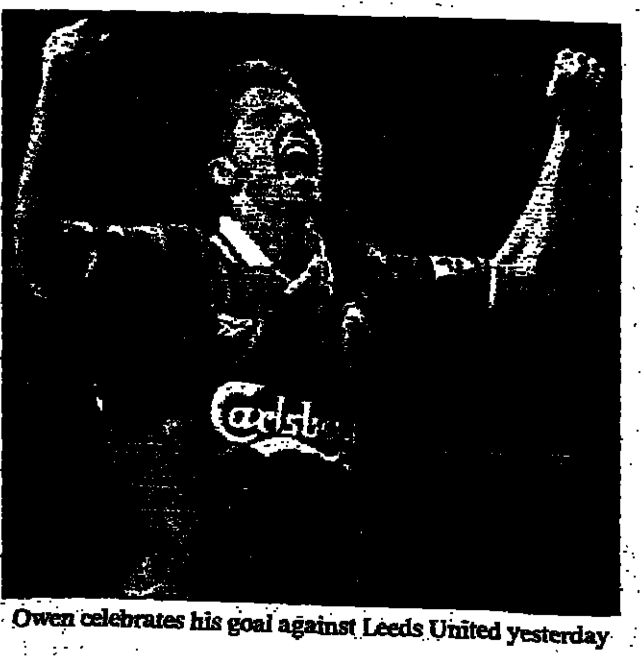
Liverpool had to wait until the 79th minute for their second, but it was a classy goal of the type that Manchester United specialise in — turning defence into attack in a lightning burst. McManaman, shackled — often unfairly — by Haaland all afternoon, finally wriggled free down the left. He knocked the ball into the centre for Fowler, who drilled his left-foot shot into the bottom corner.

Three minutes later, Liverpool were three up with a goal that owed everything to Owen's pace. He dashed past two defenders to the byline and his low cross allowed Fowler a close-range finish. It was perhaps inevitable that Liverpool should lapse, giving away the softest of goals when Kelly's free kick was headed in by Haaland, but James, under acute pressure with the newly-arrived Friedel on the bench, was not to blame.

LIVERPOOL (4-4-2): D James — J McAteer, B T Kvarme, D Matteo, S Harkness — S McManaman, P Ince (sub: J Carragher, 85min), J Redknapp (sub: P Berger, 85), O Leonhardsen — M Owen, R Fowler (sub: K Riedle, 85).

LEEDS UNITED (4-4-2): N Martyn — G Halle, D Wetherall, R Molenaar, D Robertson — G Kelly, D Hopkin, B Ribeiro, A-I Haaland — J F Hasselbaink, R Wallace.

Referee: S Lodge.



Owen celebrates his goal against Leeds United yesterday

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Chelsea player-manager lowers his title aspirations

IAN WALDIE

Duberry, the Chelsea defender, is sent flying by a tackle as Jones, the Wimbledon captain, brings the ball away with Cunningham in support yesterday

Gullit rewrites great expectations

CHELSEA 1
WIMBLEDON 1

By Peter Robinson

RUUD GULLIT was looking at the bigger picture. Chelsea had drawn with Wimbledon at home, had thrown away what should have been a win through one defensive mistake and some oddly ineffective attacking, but Gullit, their player-manager, appeared to be anything but downhearted.

"I think people outside expect more from us than maybe we are capable of at the moment," he said. "The fact that people say we should win these games is a compliment. It is already an improvement compared with what we did last year. Then people were saying that we could lose these games; now we have a good defence and a good attack and people think we should win.

"I am very happy with the way things are going. I must not expect too much all the time. I must be realistic. I have never said we are contenders, I have said that I take everything step by step. I think people see us four steps forward when we have taken only one step. You cannot do things in a rush and expectation can be sometimes too much. The next step is to go on and win these games and that is what we have to work on from today."

It was logical, sensible stuff, refreshing long-termism in a sport, a business, where short-term gain is everything, but it was extraordinary all the same. It sounded suspiciously as if Gullit was saying that Chelsea's championship challenge is less than it seems; that his team, for all their flair, their investment and their potential, are not the finished article, not yet ready seriously to trouble Manchester United's grip on the Premiership. They may be in the future, but not now.

And it was hard to argue with him on the evidence of events at Stamford Bridge yesterday. Whereas United put five goals past Wimbledon earlier in the season, Chelsea were, in truth, lucky to score one.

It was not as if they got off to a slow start, either. With just seven minutes gone, Chelsea were a goal up, their players were celebrating, the visiting team bickering among themselves and Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, was fearing the worst, perhaps even a rout.

Yet, after Vialli had side-footed Flo's astute pass into the net from six yards, Chelsea had barely another shot in anger. Worse, Wimbledon did not need one, Sinclair's mis-hit back-pass giving a seasonal gift to Michael Hughes, who rounded the goalkeeper before scoring.

That, according to Gullit, knocked the stuffing out of Chelsea, but it would be more accurate to say that it gave Wimbledon the belief that they might, after all, salvage something from their trip north of the Thames, something that looked well beyond them in the 27 minutes that elapsed before their equaliser. With Thatcher magnificent, Wimbledon, like Leeds United a fortnight earlier, defended defiantly, obstinately and increasingly confidently as Chelsea ran out of ideas.

The introduction of Zola on the hour did little to improve matters. Had he started, which Wimbledon had expected and were mightily relieved to discover would not be the case, things may have been different.

Kinnear was understandably pleased. He had come for a draw and got what he wanted — a 51st birthday present, if you like. "To go behind that early, we really feared the worst, but gradually we got back into it and there was not much to choose between the two sides as the game progressed," he said. "We are down to the bare bones with injuries and it is a valuable point for us. Yes, I'm happy."

Gullit conceded that he was disappointed with the result, if not its place in the general scheme of things, but Chelsea were frustrated. The sight of Leboeuf, normally the most phlegmatic of men, furiously kicking the ball into the dugout after the final whistle said everything about his feelings, possibly even his expectations. Gullit may believe that Chelsea are not yet ready to challenge for the title, but his players may disagree.

Even that pleased Gullit. "If the players are disappointed, then that is good," he said. "It shows that they know that they have to do better than that. They know themselves where it went wrong today and, fortunately, we have a game in a couple of days [away to Southampton], so we can put it right straight away.

"We gave a silly goal away, a sloppy goal and it was at a vital time. It could have been two or three goals to nil for us, but instead it was 1-1 and the players never fully recovered, I think. If we had not given Wimbledon that chance, however, we would have won the game. They were never going to score otherwise."

CHELSEA (4-4-2): E de Goey — F Sinclair (sub: S Clarke, 56min), M Duberry, F Leboeuf, D Granville — D Petrescu, D Wise, R Di Matteo, G Le Saux — G Vialli (sub: G Zola, 60), T A Flo

WIMBLEDON (4-5-1): N Sullivan — K Cunningham, D Blackwell, B Thatcher, A Kimble — N Ardley, S Solbakken, V Jones, R Earle, M Hughes — M Gayle (sub: C Cort, 66)

Referee: G Willard.

West Ham prosper in familiar setting

WEST HAM UNITED 1
COVENTRY CITY 0

By David Powell

GIVEN a little cup luck, West Ham United are not due to travel out of London until February. Four of their next six known fixtures are at Upton Park, interrupted only by matches away to Wimbledon tomorrow and Tottenham Hotspur in mid-January. On the statistical evidence of the season, West Ham have a month to which they can look forward.

This was their eleventh win in 12 home matches, during which they have conceded only seven goals. However, if West Ham play like this too often, they will not be blowing bubbles much longer, let alone forever. It was an adequate display but no more.

"We can play better," Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, said with understatement. Paul Kitson scored the goal that lifted West Ham to eighth place in the FA Carling Premiership. It was as well he took the chance, for there were few at either end throughout. "It was a scrap, a battle, but another good win," Redknapp added.

West Ham were fortunate that, having lost Berkovic, their most influential player, shortly before half-time they faced only ten men for much of the second half. Boateng, in his second match for Coventry City after his transfer from Feyenoord, was sent off for two bad fouls.

Gordon Strachan, the Coventry manager, had little sympathy. "George gets sent off and the game becomes a huge problem for us," Strachan said. "I do not know how many games that is we have played with ten men but it is quite a few."

Like West Ham, Coventry are into a rhythm of results. Away from home they have lost four in succession, scoring just once. If there was consolation yesterday, it was in the form of Dublin, a forward-turned-emergency defender. Dublin, Strachan said, was "excellent", but he was better than that. Playing in the middle of the back three, he ensured that Hartson and Kitson hardly won a header between them, but he was also sharp in the tackle and a determined organiser.

Dublin: defensive authority

Only once did Hartson win an attacking header, aiming wide from a Lazaridis cross. His one other opening resulted in Hedman saving his shot with his feet. Four games without a goal means that Hartson has now lost his place as the Premiership's leading scorer to Cole, of Manchester United.

Hedman, the Swedish goalkeeper who is keeping Ogrizovic on the bench, could not be faulted for the goal, Berkovic slipping a penetrating pass to Kitson, who drove in a low shot in the seventeenth minute. When Hedman was given a chance against Kitson, who had been released on a clear path to goal, he stood up to him and blocked the run.

On only one other occasion did West Ham give Hedman cause for anxiety, when Lazaridis struck bar and post from wide on the left. For the West Ham match against Wimbledon, it appears that Berkovic's injured knee will keep him out and that Lama, the France international goalkeeper signed on loan, will have to wait for his debut.

Forrest had little to do but, one missed punch apart, he could not be faulted. "Craig has done nothing wrong," Redknapp said. The best of Coventry's shots, one each from Shilton and Huckerby, were gathered safely.

Shilton — first name Sam — is the son of Peter and was making his second appearance. Famous name, unfamiliar number. Shilton was wearing No 37. A shirt worth watching, though. He showed some neat touches and a sense of adventure.

WEST HAM UNITED (3-4-1-2): C Forrest — I Pearce, R Ferdinand, D Unsworth — A Impey, S Lomas, F Lampard, S Lazaridis — E Berkovic (sub: S Potts, 42min) — P Kitson, J Hartson.

COVENTRY CITY (3-5-2): M Hedman — R Shaw, D Dublin, M Hall — R Nilsson, P Telfer, G Boateng, M O'Neill (sub: K Lightbourne, 65), S Shilton — D Huckerby, N Whelan

Referee: G Poll.

Comforts of home prove elusive for Palace

CRYSTAL PALACE 1
SOUTHAMPTON 1

By Nick Szczepanik

CRYSTAL PALACE'S season-long search for a home win in the FA Carling Premiership will continue into 1998 after the ninth team to visit them, Southampton, returned to the South Coast with a share of the points yesterday. Palace took seasonal generosity a little too far, squandering a late chance to win the match from the penalty spot, and, at this rate, even Scunthorpe United, their FA Cup opponents in a week's time, will fancy their chances of forcing at least a replay.

"I couldn't fault them for trying," Steve Coppell, the Palace manager, said of his players. "It affects them in key situations when you're looking for them to be relaxed. They get uptight and try to force things to happen. As long as they keep trying, I won't complain."

The effort was certainly there in an open, end-to-end match, but there were early indications of the way the luck has been running for Palace at home. When Neil Shipperley, returning from injury to face his former employers, headed down Linighan's diagonal cross in the seventh minute, Bruce Dyer got a touch in front of Paul Jones, the Southampton goalkeeper, only to see the ball rebound from the foot of a post. Minutes later, Dyer turned Lundekvam, ran on and shot fiercely across Jones, but Shipperley, sliding in by the far post, could not reach it.

As an attacking force, Southampton were in evidence mainly on the break, but Warhurst was a calming influence in Palace's defence, except when he and Miller left a bouncing through-ball to each other, Hirst nipping in only to put the ball wide.

Only a minute later, however, Southampton were ahead. Palmer made a strong run down the right before knocking the ball back to Dodd, whose first-time cross was volleyed in off the underside of the crossbar by Matthew Oakley from the edge of the penalty area. "The lad deserved it," Dave Jones, the Southampton manager, said. "He's been getting into good positions and just missing out."

Dyer took a tumble in the opening minute of the second half, but the ease with which he went over under challenge, when a chance looked on if he had managed to keep his feet, seemed to betray Palace's lack of confidence. His decision to shoot from an impossible angle rather than pick out a colleague soon after was equally disappointing.

Shipperley: equalising goal

Even so, it was a sign that Palace had stepped up the tempo and their pressure was rewarded in the 79th minute. Rodger's corner was headed on for Shipperley to drive in the equaliser from close range. With the bit now between his teeth, Shipperley struck a shot narrowly wide on the turn before being replaced by Itzhak Zohar, the Israel international, with 20 minutes to go.

"He [Shipperley] shouldn't have played, really," Coppell said. "Thigh strain, groin strain, everything. People have to play on at the moment." Dyer, too, played with an injury that was ultimately to prove fateful.

Kevin Davies could have won the game for Southampton when his shot was headed off the goalline by Warhurst, but Palace had the best chance for a late winner 11 minutes from time when Dyer hit the turf again under Dodd's challenge. Paul Alcock, the referee, awarded a penalty, but, with Dyer, the first-choice penalty-taker, feeling his injury, Zohar took the kick only to see his weak effort saved easily by Jones. "Bruce was not confident that he could hit the ball with enough power to take the kick, so Zohar stepped up," Coppell said.

CRYSTAL PALACE (3-5-2): K Miller — A Linighan, P Warhurst, H Hreidarsson — R Gordon, J Fullarton (sub: S Burton, 60min), A Roberts, S Rodger, D Gordon — N Shipperley (sub: I Zohar, 69), B Dyer

SOUTHAMPTON (4-3-1-2): P Jones — J Dodd, K Monkou, K Lundekvam, F Benali — M Oakley (sub: R Slater, 96), K Richardson, C Palmer — M Le Tissier (sub: A Williams 81) — E Ostenstad (sub: K Davies, 65), D Hirst

Referee: P Alcock

Bergsson special saves Bolton from the blues

BOLTON WANDERERS 1
BARNSLEY 1

By Michael Henderson

EVERYTHING was in Bolton Wanderers' favour yesterday. The most pleasing prospect that any team can look forward to on Boxing Day is a home game against the weakest team in the league, yet Bolton played so wretchedly that relegation, for the second time in three years, must be a distinct possibility.

It is sad, because they have some half-decent players, but the evidence is too compelling to think otherwise. They have two problems: they do not think it is necessary to score goals and they are quite happy to hand them to opponents. There is no point in mincing words: their defence is appalling. By half-time, Barnsley could have scored six goals and should certainly have scored three. When the bottom team toys with you, then you really have got problems.

They improved in the second half; they could hardly fail to. In fact, they might have won if Frandsen's late free kick had rebounded more favourably from the bar or if Blake had headed one chance straighter, and not driven another wider. That is Blake all over. He is big and strong, but his ratio of goals to chances is 1:5, which is not remotely good enough.

Colin Todd, their manager and a masterly defender in his day, must still be wondering what was going on in that awful first half. Fish, the South Africa centre half, was back from his winter travels and Whitlow had recovered from flu. Bergsson, the captain, is a sound professional and Todd Jr, the manager's son, is said to be improving. On this showing, he has some little distance to go.

Before the game was 20 minutes old, Barnsley had made, and missed, four glorious chances. Ashley Ward shot wide after Fish allowed Hristov to get in a cross from the byline and then volleyed over at the end of a marvellous move involving Marcelle and Redfearn. With his namesake, Gavin, in the Bolton goal to beat, he shot wide and Hristov, exchanging positions and enjoying similar freedom, hit the ball against the inside of a post.

Time and again, Todd found himself on the wrong side of the ball and Fish, for all his ability to bring the ball forward from deep positions, was far too slow to sense danger. Perhaps the Bolton midfield players should send smoke signals whenever a move breaks down. Defenders, after all, are paid in the first instance to defend, not to look pretty on the ball.

When Barnsley took the lead it was with a goal that they had thoroughly earned. Gavin Ward flapped rather feebly at Sheridan's shot and his half-save offered Hristov a chance he headed home from an irregular stooping position. The goalkeeper, standing in for the injured Branagan, appeared shocked by such impudence. He should not have been.

Bolton failed to make a single chance before half-time and yet they went in level. It was the most extraordinary goal, as percussive in its way as the hailstones that crackled onto the roof of the Reebok Stadium. Bergsson, collecting a clearance from the corner that his pass had helped to win, drew breath and returned the ball from fully 40 yards beyond Watson, who, by wandering six paces off his line, had exposed a skylight in the top corner of his goal.

If he plays for another ten years, Bergsson will never sniff a goal like that. Scoring, of course, is not his principal job, though he is entitled to think he could have done better than Blake when Frandsen's cross gave him a clear view of goal. The header went wide and, for a man whose job is scoring goals, that was a howler.

Bolton have scored 17 times in 20 games and only once have they scored more than one goal at home. Holdsworth, suspended yesterday, will soon be back to assist Blake, but a record of one goal in nine starts is not encouraging. Winter is drawing in. Time is running out, and so are the excuses.

BOLTON WANDERERS (4-4-2): G Ward — G Bergsson, A Todd, M Fish (sub: G Taggart, 83min; sub: N Cox, 86), M Whitlow — M Johansen (sub: A Gunnlaugsson, 58), P Frandsen, J Pollock, S Sellars — P Beardsley, N Blake.

BARNSLEY (4-4-2): D Watson — N Eaden, A de Zeeuw, A Moses, D Barnard — C Marcelle (sub: A Liddell, 71), E Tinkler, D Sheridan, N Redfearn — G Hristov (sub: J Hendrie, 85), A Ward.

Referee: S Dunn.

Nervy Arsenal struggle to subdue Leicester

ARSENAL 2
LEICESTER CITY 1

By Brian Glanville

WHOEVER would have thought it? Arsenal, going two goals up early in the second half, albeit in farcical circumstances, ended the game on the ropes, defending desperately against a Leicester City team belatedly committed to attack.

Well might Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, say: "I could feel we had not enough physical and mental strength to keep our calm and keep the ball down. I thought we were in control of the game for one hour and 15 minutes. You could see that the confidence was not of the highest, and the last ten minutes were terrible, and you could see how terrible it was when it is so important to win a game and that made me nervous."

Arsenal, whose confidence was ultimately conspicuous by its absence, could give thanks that Martin O'Neill, the Leicester manager, began the game with so negative an attitude, paying Arsenal a respect that they clearly did not deserve. With Spencer Prior, one of his three regular defenders, absent, O'Neill pulled Savage into the back three and cautiously decided to use Kaamark to man-mark Bergkamp.

Those who recently saw Leicester lose to Everton will know that, even at full strength, they are hardly an exciting team. But until, in the closing stages, they reshuffled, pushed Elliott forward, brought on Cottee and set about the Arsenal defence, they were scarcely at the races. Except, it must be said, when Emile Heskey, after eight minutes, headed Guppy's right-wing inswinging corner against the angle of post and bar.

Other than that, the first half was emphatically Arsenal's, although it brought them only a single goal. This came in the 36th minute, immediately after Ian Wright had struck a loose ball with a powerful right-foot shot, obliging Keller to fling himself to make the save.

Arsenal quickly gained a free kick on the left and Bergkamp's curling ball was expertly headed in by David Platt, who had recently headed such a goal against Manchester United.

This, after an early, reckless backward pass, was an improved performance by Platt, who had to go off with a groin injury that will probably put him out of the FA Carling Premiership match against Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane tomorrow.

Ian Wright will miss it, too. Though hardly the Wright of recent memory, he might, on another first-half occasion, also have scored when, after a strong run by the adventurous Vieira, the ball ran to him. Keller saved that shot, too. He also saved when he punched out Dixon's cross; Overmars shot, the ball was deflected but the goalkeeper stopped it.

Arsenal's second goal was worthy of the pantomime season. After Bould booted the ball downfield, Steve Walsh, attempting to find his goalkeeper, beat him instead with what might have been called an exquisite lob had it come from an attacking player. Midway through the half it might have been 3-0 and the end of the match as a contest, when Keller missed a corner. Overmars made the shot, but Savage cleared off the line.

Were Leicester too cautious until that hectic last burst? O'Neill angrily denied it. "We had a grandstand finish," he said, "but I felt we never had that real self-belief that we could come here and compete against a very solid Arsenal side."

In the event, Leicester's late enterprise was rewarded with the second strange goal of the game, after 78 minutes. David Seaman, rushing out of his penalty area, tried to dribble the ball away, lost it and Lennon's shot flew past Dixon on the line.

Nine minutes from the end, Parker's left-wing corner reached Walsh on the far post and gave him a chance to atone. He very nearly did. His attempt struck the post and ended in Seaman's arms.

ARSENAL (4-4-2): D Seaman — L Dixon, S Bould, M Keown, N Winterburn — R Parlour, P Vieira, D Platt (sub: S Hughes, 58min), M Overmars — I Wright (sub: N Anelka, 74), D Bergkamp

LEICESTER CITY (3-5-2): K Keller — S Walsh, P Kaamark, M Elliott — R Savage, N Lennon, M Izzet, S Campbell (sub: G Parker, 60), S Guppy — E Heskey, S Claridge (sub: A Cottee, 69).

Referee: D Elleray

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Hoddle should give youth its head at the World Cup

EDDIE KEOGH

Owen, right, is pushing his way into England's front line

BRIAN GLANVILLE

Youth will be served as the boxing adage; somewhat undermined by the longevity of such as George Foreman and Larry Holmes. In football, one is not quite sure. Less so than ever after Glenn Hoddle's extraordinary, gratuitous and surely excessive critique of Michael Owen: at just 18, the great hope of English football.

Hoddle, plainly, is as yet unconvinced. "There are certain things he needs to stamp out of his game," the England coach said, after watching Owen play, effectively, for England Under-21 against Greece last week, "and out of his off-the-pitch situation as well. I am not going into details [*why not?*] but he is not the finished article everybody says he is."

Everybody? Hardly anybody, surely. Owen's admirers, of whom I am very much one, are impressed by his tremendous pace and the way he uses it, his precocious confidence, his intelligent positioning and passing, his courage to take on and resist the buffeting of bigger opponents.

As things stand, Hoddle must surely feel the hot breath of a gift-horse on his face. As the England coach, it is his job to encourage young talent — of which, goodness knows, we have little enough — rather than undermine it.

Yes, I would be delighted to see Owen in England's eventual World Cup party. With Alan Shearer's recovery still uncertain, Ian Wright so sadly out of form, Robbie Fowler, Owen's fellow Liverpudlian — with whom Hoddle may somehow be confusing him — a present disappointment, Owen might prove the man England needs.

Hoddle, perhaps, might cast his mind back to his own debut for England, a brilliant display against Bulgaria at Wembley, capped by a spectacular goal. Whereupon Ron Greenwood, the England manager, dropped him from the next game with the lapidary words: "Disappointment is part of football."

Later, Hoddle had to endure sustained humiliation from Bobby Robson, Greenwood's successor, until at last, in England's American training camp before the 1986 World Cup, light dawned and Robson joyously compared Hoddle to his idol, Johnny Haynes. I had not realised the Road to Damascus passed through Colorado Springs. What is it about England managers?

But not only about them. When Argentina were due to stage the 1978 World Cup, their manager, César Luis Menotti, decided to omit his own protégé, Diego Maradona, then 17.

The actual inside left, Beto Alonso, did well enough and Argentina, after all, did win the World Cup, but Maradona's virtuosity might have made things easier. It was, of course, different with the incomparable Pelé, who might well have been regarded as the template rather than the exception who proves the rule, with his extreme youth.

Pelé was playing for Brazil at 16. At 17, he excelled in the 1958 World Cup, scoring a hat-trick against France in the semi-final, two glorious goals against Sweden in the final.

Ever since Matt Busby's adventurous day, Manchester United have been prepared commendably to give youth its fling, hence the nickname of the Busby Babes.

Many years ago, after a match at Chelsea, I asked Busby about this policy, to hear the simple but cogent reply: "If you don't put them in, you can't know what you've got."

The muscular Duncan Edwards was United's regular left half from the age of 17 until his cruel death after the Munich air crash at the age of 21. By then he was an England star.

Later, George Best would scintillate as a teenager on United's wings. "If I'd been born ugly," he once modestly said, "you'd never have heard of Pelé."

John Charles, who became the hero of Juventus, for whom he scored nearly 100 league goals in four seasons, was a dominating centre half for Leeds United at 17 and was capped for Wales at that age.

Immediately before the war, there were Wolverhampton Wanderers' so-called Buckley Babes, manager Major Frank Buckley's teenagers, allegedly fed on monkey gland tablets.

Jimmy Mullen played in the 1939 FA Cup semi-final at the age of 16, and went on to win England caps well after the war.

Go slightly further back and we find another precocious outside left, Cliff "Boy" Bastin, of Arsenal, who moved in a cocoon of calm, and had won every honour in the game at the age of 19.

Besides Owen, we have another remarkable 18-year-old in Danny Cadamarteri, of Everton, a compound of pace, power, courage and confidence; qualities displayed in their time by Pelé, Maradona, Best, Charles and Bastin, not to mention Owen.

Such players are, blessedly, hard to discourage. But Hoddle should stop denigrating Owen. For his own sake.

ALAN WELLER

PAUL BARKER

Now and then: Wilkinson, at Millwall, can look back happily to the day last season when his goal helped to end Barnsley's 110-year wait to reach football's top division

Barnsley's discarded hero has no regrets

Mark Hodkinson meets the player left behind by his club's historic rise

LIFE AT THE TOP

The ball was punted through the drizzle towards Bradford City's penalty area. Amid a battery of elbows and knees jostling for kicking space, Paul Wilkinson volunteered his forehead. The ball ricocheted beyond the goalkeeper, Aidan Davison, and sailed into the net.

At 3.21pm on Saturday, April 26, 1997, Wilkinson found himself at the epicentre of British football. His goal had set Barnsley on course for promotion to football's top flight after a 110-year wait: hundreds had worn the Barnsley shirt before him, but he was the chosen man.

After the match, the players, with their wives and girlfriends, celebrated long into the night and Wilkinson was fêted at every turn. He was bought enough drinks to last another 110 years and his fiancée had to step aside while appreciative fans planted beery kisses on his cheeks. "Thank you, thank you," they blubbered, and swore their everlasting love.

Sentimentality is an indulgence afforded to football supporters. We reminisce, rue and romanticise until, eventually, even 4-0 home defeats take on a charm of their own. Unfortunately, football clubs are not privy to this luxury, as Wilkinson soon discovered.

As Wilkinson punched the air and danced across the turf, he was not to know that it would be his final full appearance at Oakwell in a Barnsley shirt. He had played in all but one of Barnsley's games in the first division, but fell foul of the paradox that lifting the club to a higher status also lifted him out of a job.

The wealth generated by promotion enabled Danny Wilson, the Barnsley manager, to purchase Georgi Hristov from Partizan Belgrade and, a few weeks into the campaign, Ashley Ward from Derby County.

Just five months after his moments of glory, Wilkinson was collecting his boots from Oakwell and heading to London where he joined Millwall in a £150,000 deal. The Barnsley supporters had promised him the world, but the club balked at the two-year contract he felt he deserved. "It can be a harsh world, but ultimately we accept as footballers that we are commodities. I had become surplus to requirements at Barnsley," Wilkinson said.

He joined Barnsley on a free transfer from Middlesbrough, where he had spent four seasons. He was reunited soon afterwards with his former Middlesbrough strike partner, John Hendrie. The pair are efficacious; they have scored 114 goals between them in five seasons together. "I was struck with Barnsley straight away. It is a homely club but it has a lot of ambition. There was a real buzz about the town," Wilkinson said. He felt this energy at close quarters since he lived in Cawthorne, on the outskirts of the town.

While Barnsley's trademark last season was thoughtful, passing football, Wilkinson felt his role was more rudimentary. "It was a real pass-and-move team, but I gave them another dimension. I was the tallest, and since I'm not the most skilful player in the world, they tended to use me more as a battering ram and play off me," he said.

At Christmas last year, Barnsley had lost just three times in 23 league matches. They have won just four games in 20 this season and have suffered the ignominy of conceding 51 league goals already. Few Barnsley fans expected anything but a fraught battle for survival, but, inevitably, there have been a few grumbles muttered into beers. Some feel that Wilson tinkered needlessly with the winning team.

"I think Danny should have given last year's team longer to come good, but I'm bound to think that, aren't I?" Wilkinson said. "I have no hard feelings towards him or Barnsley. I always look for their score first."

Wilkinson's final appearance for Barnsley was against Chelsea when they were beaten 6-0 in August. He was substituted at half-time and had a spectator's view of the second-half annihilation. "I think they've learnt a lot since then and have adapted well. There is no problem at Barnsley because no one expected them to survive anyway," he says. "I've a sneaking feeling, though, that they are going to stay up. I don't think people appreciate the spirit and resolve within the club."

Instead of a season at football's top table, Wilkinson is among the blood and thud of the journeymen of the Nationwide League second division. He suffered a "whack on the ankle" last Saturday in Millwall's win against Wycombe Wanderers and has spent most of this week under treatment. "It's a lot more physical than I expected," he said. He cannot complain too volubly since Billy Bonds, the Millwall manager, signed him chiefly because he can remember fractious encounters when he was a defender with West Ham United and Wilkinson played for Nottingham Forest. "I left him with six stitches in his forehead after one match — and he still signed me," Wilkinson said.

He has moved with his fiancée to Bromley, Kent, and, though he recalls his time at Barnsley fondly, he has no qualms about swapping clubs for the seventh time in his career. "I would have loved to have stayed there for another couple of seasons, but that's not what I was offered," Wilkinson said. "That's just the way it is in football."

THE TIMES

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LATEST QUALIFIERS FOR AREA FINALS

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Spartak's brave incorruptibles earn just reward

Off the line

by Russell Kempson

NOT long after the Spartak Moscow players checked into the Oktyabrskaya hotel on the eve of their important Russian League match against Rotor Volgograd, the telephones began ringing off the hook. Representatives of the local *Intimdosug* — "Intimate Leisure" — firm were apparently touting for business at the bargain rate of 200,000 roubles (£20) per hour.

Oleg Romantsev, the Spartak coach, happily reported that such "provocation" was resisted and that all of his brave lads had declined the "sweet-voiced suggestions". And to be absolutely safe, they refused to walk farther than 15 metres from the hotel entrance. Spartak's clean-living souls went on to beat Volgograd and became Russian champions for the fifth time.

Parkinson floored

Phil Parkinson, the Reading midfield player and one of the more rugged practitioners in the Nationwide League, has been involved in his fair share of incidents in a career spanning 13 seasons. It was thus barely surprising when his two-year-old son, George, slipped over while kicking a ball around in the players' bar at Reading's Elm Park ground and fractured his left leg.

A foot-to-thigh plaster now covers the broken limb but Parkinson Jr, like dad, should soon be back terrorising opponents.

Tea and sympathy

Howard Wilkinson, the Football Association technical director, is not noted for his histrionics. Dour, boring even, but never overdemonstrative … or is he? Ian Baird, the recently retired captain of Brighton, tells an enlightening anecdote from an FA Cup tie against Watford at Vicarage Road. "Howard wasn't too happy at half-time and came in ranting and raving," Baird recalled. "He picked up a teapot and slung it at the wall but, unfortunately, it rebounded back and the tea went all over his face. He was writhing on the floor in agony." Must have been strong tea.

Dancing Dell boys

The Dell, Southampton, is much the same as most football grounds before kick-off, with street-sellers hawking everything from dodgyburgers to programmes, from fanzines to T-shirts. Before the match against Leicester City, many Saints supporters were made an offer with a difference when they were handed leaflets advertising the delights of The Silhouette nightclub in the city. Closer inspection revealed its speciality to be topless table-dancing.

Scotland may have to make their excuses and leave early from the World Cup knees-up in France next year, but the omnipresent Tartan Army is sure to create a favourable impression. Yet when they invade Saint-Etienne on June 23 for the game against Morocco, they may be outchanted by their rival fans. "We will be the best-supported team in group A," Mohamed Berrada, the Moroccan Ambassador in Paris, said. "There will be displays of the country's folklore in the stands, lots of banners and countless demonstrations of support of all kinds." Morocco has more than 800,000 expatriates living in France.

☐ STRANGE BUT TRUE: Duncan Ferguson, the former Scotland striker rumoured to be wanting to leave Goodison Park, has had the Everton club badge tattooed on an arm.

McLean seeking to draw Rangers' sting

By Kevin McCarra

FEW visiting teams approach Ibrox in a mood of optimism. However, having beaten Rangers once in the Bell's Scottish League premier division and once in the Coca-Cola Cup already this season, Dundee United may view the game today against the champions with equanimity.

Over the past few weeks, it has been the rest of the clubs that have left them in the doldrums. United were the rising force in the premier division until they met Celtic twice in the space of eight days last month. The league game was lost 4-0 and, in the Coca-Cola Cup final, Tommy McLean's team were beaten 3-0.

In the three matches that followed, United also failed to score, let alone win. The sequence was broken only last Saturday, when they recorded a 2-1 victory over a St Johnstone team that had been reduced to ten men. It hardly constituted a resurgence, nor would it pass for the harbinger of a happy afternoon at Ibrox.

United, all the same, are better than most at assimilating their disappointments and drawing shrewd conclusions. When they first met Rangers this season, Marco Negri scored five times and United lost 5-1. It is hard to think of another club that could so successfully revamp themselves and beat the champions in their next two meetings, rationing Negri to a single goal over that pair of games.

If Maurice Malpas remains his prescient self in defence and if, beside him, Steven Pressley recovers the form that vanished in the two heavy beatings by Celtic, then United could concoct a tense match with Rangers. Even so, the visitors' fortitude should prove insufficient today. There was an intimidating potency about Rangers' 5-2 mauling of Heart of Midlothian last weekend.

Walter Smith's team have been peculiarly inconsistent this season, but there was such an abundance of fine play in the trouncing of Hearts that some of it must surely slop over into the weeks ahead.

Celtic, with the sturdiness that has seen them keep a clean sheet in their past six matches, look equipped to maintain a gruelling struggle and they are only one point behind Rangers in the league. Today, they travel to face St Johnstone and may be able to field Marc Rieper, the centre half who is now back in full training after a calf strain.

Hearts, the third-placed team who take on Dunfermline at East End Park today, trail Celtic by a single point but the Edinburgh club will find it exceedingly hard to persuade the public that they are not, in reality, lagging far behind the Old Firm. No matter what the league table might say, a credibility gap has opened up after defeats by Celtic and Rangers in their past two fixtures.

THE TIMES SATURDAY

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Campbell's double puts paid to Swindon

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 3
SWINDON TOWN 0

By Richard Hobson

PERHAPS it stems from renewed confidence or freedom from injury. Maybe he is simply flattered by inferior opposition. Nobody at the City Ground is analysing the return to prominence of Kevin Campbell. In his present form, his deeds are enough.

Yesterday, Campbell was all too much for a scrappy Swindon Town. Not only did his game incorporate pace, power and menace, he also demonstrated a deft touch that ought to prompt his many detractors to reassess a player who has endured more ridicule than most.

His two goals inside 12 minutes in the first half mean that he now has 12 in 21 Nationwide League first division games this season. In themselves they would have guaranteed victory, such was the paucity of the response offered by the visitors, but Andy Johnson scored a third before the half-hour was up to ensure that the second half could be played at a canter. What a contrast to Boxing Day last year, when Forest, embroiled in a protracted takeover, were bottom of the FA Carling Premiership, having been outclassed by Manchester United in a 4-0 defeat.

They visit Manchester City tomorrow in second place, behind Middlesbrough, but Campbell is unlikely to find City so accommodating, given that Frank Clark, the manager at Maine Road, is probably his biggest admirer among English overlords. Clark it was who bought Campbell for £2.5 million to replace Stan Collymore three seasons ago and how many Aston Villa supporters would gladly see Campbell replace their struggling striker for a second time?

Campbell scored the first of his brace after ten minutes. Even by this formative stage of proceedings, the visitors conveyed vulnerability in their three-man defence, and the manner in which Campbell found so much space merely confirmed first impressions. Woan supplied him with a short, sharp pass between Borrows and McDonald, and Campbell, running through unopposed, placed his shot inside the far corner.

Three minutes later, Gooden drove a free kick narrowly wide from the edge of the penalty area. It was to prove Swindon's best opportunity of the half and possibly of the game. After 22 minutes, they went further behind and only had themselves to blame. Finney, extraordinarily, dribbled the ball out of play as he progressed unimpeded along the left. The throw was taken quickly and this time Campbell's dart was spotted by Gemmill. Another through-ball; a second clinical finish.

A clash of heads with Rogers meant that Thompson was receiving treatment in the dressing-room when Forest scored their third. Rogers had recovered sufficiently to swing a hanging ball in from the left and Van Hooijdonk, stretching acrobatically, managed to keep it in play. Not only that, he also offered an inviting ball across goal which Johnson, unmarked, headed in powerfully from close range.

Leitch, the last defender, was a little fortunate to escape with a booking when he pulled down Campbell in the 42nd minute and Van Hooijdonk headed inches over the bar from Woan's corner as Forest finished the half decadently.

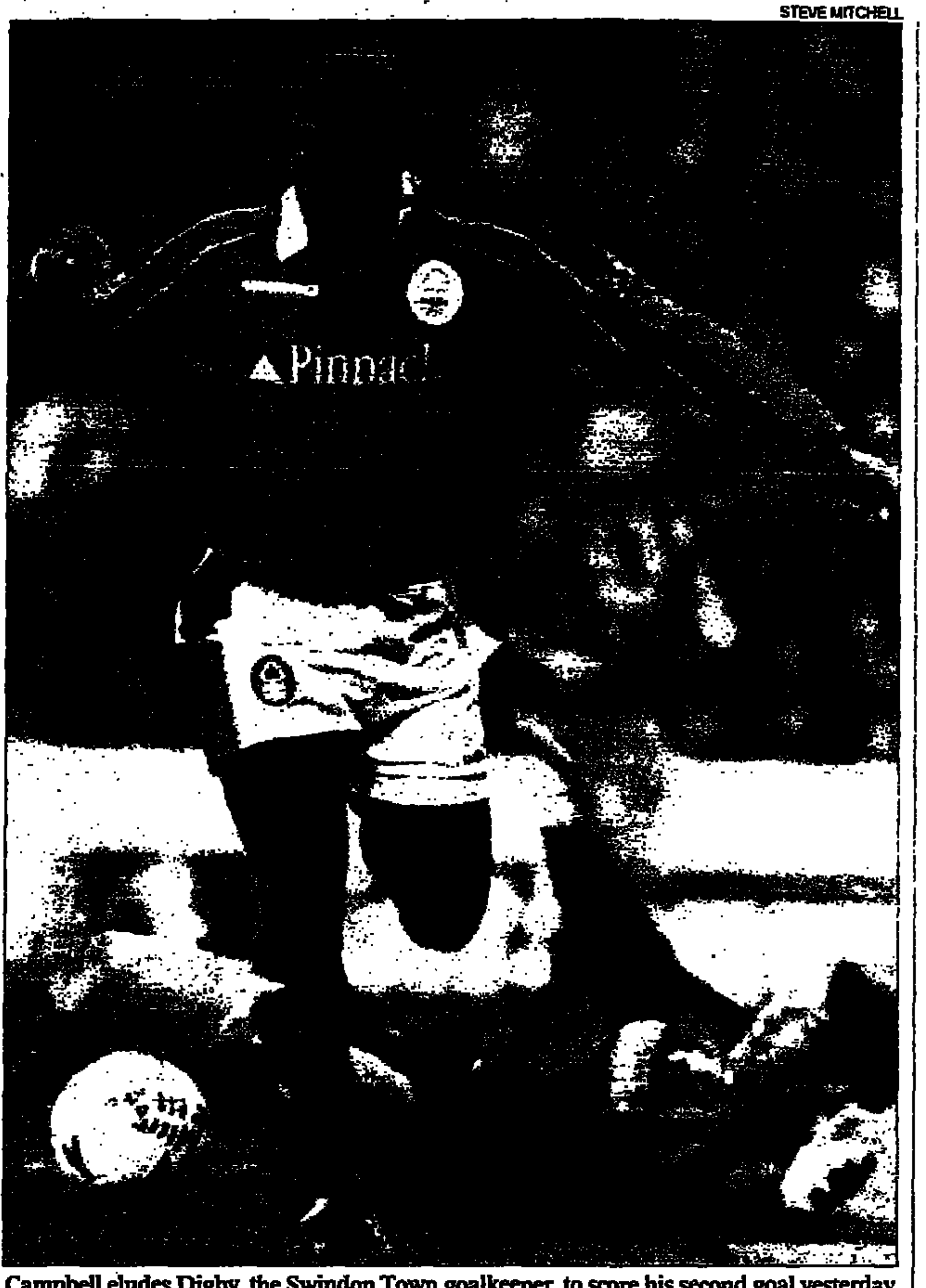
They could not discover such fluency after the interval, but nor did Swindon create many opportunities of note. Had Stone ended a sweeping move with a more accurate cross, Campbell might have completed his hat-trick with ten minutes remaining. He deserved no less.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (4-4-2): D Beasant — D Lyttle, C Cooper, S Chettle, A Rogers — S Stone (sub: I Moore, 87min), A Johnson, S Gemmill (sub: T Bonalair, 82), I Woan (sub: C Armstrong, 82) — P van Hooijdonk, K Campbell

SWINDON TOWN (3-5-2): F Digby — A McDonald, B Borrows (sub: J Drysdale, 28), C Taylor — M Robinson, L Collins, S Leitch, D Thompson, T Gooden — S Finney (sub: C Hay, 54), G Ndah

Referee: G Laws.

STEVE MITCHELL



Campbell eludes Digby, the Swindon Town goalkeeper, to score his second goal yesterday

Little festive cheer for managers at new clubs

By David Powell

THE managers' merry-go-round in the Nationwide League first division was not a merry ride yesterday. Denis Smith succeeded Ray Harford as West Bromwich Albion manager and lost his first match in charge. Malcolm Crosby stepped into Smith's shoes at Oxford United and was also beaten in his first match. Harford, now at Queens Park Rangers, was a loser, too.

West Bromwich went down 2-1 at Reading and the other leading clubs upped the pace. Middlesbrough retained top position, an own goal by Gray giving them a 1-0 victory away to Huddersfield Town.

Sunderland also strengthened the North East's promotion foothold by moving into fifth place, goals from Phillips and Johnston securing a 2-0 win over Bradford City before 40,055 spectators, their largest crowd at home in the League for 17 years.

Charlton Athletic, with a 2-1 home victory over Norwich City, rose to third, ahead of Sheffield United, who drew 2-2 away to Stoke City.

Portsmouth, alone at the bottom before yesterday, are one of four clubs on 23 points after a 3-1 home victory over QPR. Pethick, McLoughlin and Hall scored their goals.

Bury are bottom on goals scored. They drew 0-0 with Tranmere Rovers at Prenton Park yesterday. Tranmere are also on 23 points, as are Huddersfield. Oxford lost by the only goal, a Goodman header, away to Wolverhampton Wanderers.

The second division promotion race went to form, the gap between the automatic and play-off places widening from 14 to 16 points. But, of the top five in the third division, only the leaders, Notts County, won, 2-1 away to Scunthorpe United.

Rampant City expose gulf in promotion class

BRISTOL CITY 4
MILLWALL 1

By Mel Webb

MILLWALL may be in the middle of the best season in their recent troubled history, but they were made to look more like paper tigers than rampant Lions yesterday. Credible Nationwide League second division promotion contenders? If this was an example of their best work, they are not about to pass any meaningful exams this term.

Bristol City, on the other hand, looked much more like the real thing. Class, style, wit and movement are constituents of a lifeblood that courses healthily through the side: this comprehensive victory was their thirteenth in the past 15 league games. They drew the other two. In anyone's language, that is promotion form, with knobs on.

To be absolutely fair to Millwall, there are very few sides in the second division — and, most probably, not many more in the first — who could have lived with Bristol City. They were irresistible, a side without hang-ups or complexes, a team revelling in the fact that they are on a roll and enjoying every precious second of it.

This game, played in front of the biggest gate in the second division this season, had to start ten minutes late because, in spite of the club's best efforts, they had not been able to get all of the crowd of 16,128 into Ashton Gate by midday. John Ward, the City manager, ever alert to the cute move, used the delayed start as part of his pre-match team talk. "I told the lads to enjoy the fact that they had to wait for another ten minutes before going out there," he said. "I knew that if we played the way we could, the people who might have been coming along just because it's Christmas might enjoy it enough to return. I think we succeeded in that." He could say that again.

As though to show how impatient they were to bloody Millwall's noses, they tore into the attack from the opening seconds and hardly let up. They led after ten minutes, when a lovely pass from Goater, their transfer-listed leading scorer, liberated Bell on the left, and his accurate cross was tapped in from five yards by Cramb.

A long throw from Goodridge found Edwards seven minutes later and his looping header went over the unavailing arms of the veteran, Spink, and into the far corner. Millwall had their only decent spell in the early stages of the second half and even had the temerity to score through Veart in the 53rd minute. The goal gave the scoreline the appearance of respectability that Millwall did not deserve, but six minutes later Tinnion's fierce and curling free kick from 30 yards gave the suspect Spink no chance.

That, to be honest, was it. Game over. Taylor scored City's fourth with 22 minutes left with a stooping header from Tinnion's inswinging free kick. What fun it all was; unless you happened to come from southeast London, that is.

BRISTOL CITY (4-4-2): K Welch — A Locke, L Carey, S Taylor, M Bell — G Goodridge (sub: S Murray, 76min), T Doherty, R Edwards, B Tinnion — S Goater (sub: S Torpey, 82), C Cramb.

MILLWALL (5-3-2): N Spink — D Savage, S Fitzgerald, K Brown, B Law, L Neill (sub: P Sturgess, 27) — R Newman, R Bowry, C Veart — P Shaw, K Grant.

Referee: R Harris

McCarthy corners the market

IPSWICH TOWN 0
BIRMINGHAM CITY 1

By Bill Edgar

AS IF Jason Cundy and Adam Tanner, the Ipswich Town central defenders, had not suffered enough in 1997, they were given a torrid time by Birmingham City at Portman Road yesterday with the new year in sight. And, just when it seemed that Ipswich would survive their mistakes by escaping with a point, the visiting team scored with seven minutes remaining from a corner by Jon McCarthy.

The 6ft 7in frame of Kevin Francis distracted the Ipswich defence at the near post, allowing McCarthy's inswinging cross to fly straight over the line. Simon Milton, of Ipswich, hacked the ball away from behind the line and at first it was incorrectly thought that Cundy, off whom the ball then bounced back into the net, had scored his third own goal of the season.

In the summer, Cundy was found to have testicular cancer, from which he has fully recovered, while Tanner was banned for three months earlier in the year after testing positive for cocaine.

Nicky Forster, who formed a highly effective striking partnership with Peter Ndlovu, beat Tanner for pace down the right after only four minutes, but his centre was struck wide by McCarthy.

Soon after, Ndlovu turned Tanner inside out on the edge of the penalty area and saw his shot tipped behind, via the crossbar, by Richard Wright, Ipswich's outstanding 20-year-old goalkeeper, whose agility saved his side from a heavier defeat.

Wright, one of four England Under-21 internationals at Ipswich, also made a brilliant low save from Ndlovu after slick footwork from the Zimbabwean had left Cundy and Tanner standing.

Before yesterday, Ipswich had lost only one of their past nine games, a run that had coincided with the arrival of David Johnson, from Bury. Johnson, whose six goals in eight games since his transfer have left him top scorer at both Ipswich and Bury, was kept largely in check by Steve Bruce, Birmingham's veteran centre back, but he enjoyed greater success when he moved to the flanks.

The way he beat Jonathan Bass and McCarthy on one occasion would have impressed any watching Jamaica scout considering whether to grant Johnson his wish of playing in the World Cup finals.

Trevor Francis, the Birmingham manager, said: "It was a win we thoroughly deserved. We've thrown too many points away this season when we failed to finish off good approach play."

George Burley, his Ipswich counterpart, admitted: "I thought we were very poor. We've had a good run of late but today's performance was not up to standard."

IPSWICH TOWN 4-4-2: R Wright — M Stockwell, A Tanner (sub: A Mowbray, 52min), J Cundy, M Taricco — S Milton, G Williams, M Holland, R Petta — A Mathie, D Johnson

BIRMINGHAM CITY 4-4-2: I Bennett — J Bass, S Bruce, G Ablett, S Charlton — J McCarthy, S Robinson, M O'Connor, B Hughes (sub: S Grainger, 69) — N Forster, P Ndlovu (sub: K Francis, 69).

Referee: R Furnandiz.

Barnet return the compliment

BARNET 2
PETERBOROUGH UTD 0

By Ivo Tennant

AT THE end of last summer, Barnet were summarily beaten by Peterborough United. A scoreline of 5-1 is not forgotten readily. The return fixture at Underhill was notable as much for the absorption of past mistakes as for two well-crafted goals by Phil Simpson and Sean Devine that brought about a surprisingly straightforward victory.

For all the abuse that he received on his last visit, Barry Fry, the Peterborough manager, has an affection for Barnet, one of his former clubs. "This was the biggest beating we have had this season, but I am delighted for my old team because I want to see them promoted. I could not believe hearing that they might be kicked out of the Football League because Underhill does not meet its criteria."

Barnet were told originally by the Department for the Environment that a decision over the proposed site for their new ground would be made by Christmas. That has not come to pass. To their credit, they were unaffected by the uncertainty yesterday.

In training, they had worked on restricting the number of crosses that Peterborough's wingers customarily provide for Quinn and Carruthers. The ploy came off. Quinn was restricted to long-range free kicks and one shot that he scuffed wide from outside the penalty area. Nevertheless, Peterborough, who were a point behind the leaders, Notts County, at the start, still reckoned that, since they were playing down the slope after a goalless first half, the match would be won. It was a complacent attitude, one that was not worthy of arguably the most talented team in the Nationwide League third division.

John Still, the Barnet manager, feels that Peterborough's strength is such that they should be "running away with the league". So he worked on ensuring that his team had a more muscular approach, but he was hampered in the very first minute when Stockley, his right wing back, was taken off with a knee injury.

By half-time, Barnet had had the better chances. Devine, their leading scorer who has now come off the transfer list, missed one opportunity when his left-foot shot was beaten out by Tyler and two more through lofting attempted drives over the bar.

Yet the goals were pleasingly taken. After 57 minutes, a decent cross by Wilson, a substitute, was placed past Tyler by Simpson, who remains on the transfer list. Eleven minutes from the end, as Peterborough chased an equaliser, Devine was sent clear by Harle and scored with only the goalkeeper to beat. "If we play like that every week, we can win the league," Still said, "and when my players are a little older they will perform like this all the time."

BARNET (3-5-2): L Harrison — G Heald, L Howarth, M Basham — S Stockley (sub: P Wilson, 3min, sub: B Manuel, 89), S Searle, W Goodhind, P Simpson, M Harle — S Devine, S McGleish (sub: T Mustafa, 89)

PETERBOROUGH UNITED (4-4-2): M Tyler — D Linton (sub: A Neal, 67), D Rennie, A Edwards, A Drury — D Farrell, S Castle (sub: N Lewis, 64), D Payne, S Houghton — M Carruthers (Z Rowe, 64), J Quinn

Referee: B Knight

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

FA Carling Premiership

ARSENAL (1) 2 LEICESTER (0) 1
Platt 36 Lennon 77
Walsh 56 (og) 38,023

ASTON VILLA (1) 4 TOTTENHAM (0) 1
Draper 38, 68 Calderwood 59
Collymore 81, 89 38,644

BOLTON (1) 1 BARNSLEY (1) 1
Bergsson 38 Hristov 20
25,000

CHELSEA (1) 1 WIMBLEDON (1) 1
Vialli 8 Hughes 28
34,100

C PALACE (0) 1 SOUTHAMPTON (1) 1
Shipperley 62 Oakley 39
22,853

DERBY (1) 1 NEWCASTLE (0) 0
Eranio 4 (pen) 30,232
Sent off: D Batty (Newcastle) 64

LIVERPOOL (0) 3 LEEDS (0) 1
Owen 46 Haaland 84
Fowler 79, 83 43,854

MAN UTD (2) 2 EVERTON (0) 0
Berg 14 55,167
Cole 35

SHEFF WED (0) 0 BLACKBURN (0) 0
33,502

WEST HAM (1) 1 COVENTRY (0) 0
Kitson 17 24,532
Sent off: G Boateng (Coventry) 55

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	20	14	4	2	47	13	46
Blackburn	20	11	7	2	35	19	40
Chelsea	20	12	3	5	46	20	39
Liverpool	19	10	4	5	34	18	34
Leeds	20	10	4	6	28	22	34
Arsenal	19	9	6	4	34	22	33
Derby	20	9	5	6	34	27	32
West Ham	20	9	1	10	26	31	28
Leicester	20	7	6	7	24	20	27
Newcastle	19	7	5	7	20	23	26
Aston Villa	20	7	4	9	24	26	25
Wimbledon	19	6	6	7	20	22	24
C Palace	20	5	7	8	18	26	22
Sheff Wed	20	6	4	10	31	43	22
Southampton	20	6	3	11	24	30	21
Bolton	20	4	9	7	17	30	21
Coventry	20	4	8	8	17	28	20
Tottenham	20	5	4	11	18	38	19
Everton	20	4	5	11	17	29	17
Barnsley	20	4	3	13	18	51	15

Nationwide League

First division

CHARLTON (0) 2 NORWICH (0) 1
Kinsella 59 Bellamy 81 (pen)
Robinson 62 14,472
Sent off: M Milligan (Norwich) 90

CREWE (1) 1 MAN CITY (0) 0
Holsgrove 19 5,759

HUDDERSFIELD (0) 0 MIDDLESBRO (0) 1
18,820 Gray 76 (og)

IPSWICH (0) 0 BIRMINGHAM (0) 1
17,459 McCarthy 83

NOTTM F (3) 3 SWINDON (0) 0
Campbell 10, 22 26,500
Johnson 29

PORTSMTH (1) 3 QPR (1) 1
Pethick 35 Sheron 31
McLoughlin 62 (pen) 12,314
Hall 80

READING (2) 2 WEST BROM (0) 1
McDermott 2 (og) Kilbane 77
Williams 27 10,154

STOCKPORT (0) 3 PORT VALE (0) 0
Travis 66, 80 10,003
Bennett 71

STOKE (0) 2 SHEFF UTD (0) 2
Forsyth 66 Taylor 59
Thorne 86 *Deane 90*
19,723

SUNDERLAND (1) 2 BRADFORD (0) 0
Phillips 11 40,055
Johnston 58

TRANMERE (0) 0 BURY (0) 0
9,146

WOLVRHMPTN (1) 1 OXFORD UTD (0) 0
Goodman 19 26,238

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Middlesbro	24	14	6	4	40	19	48
Nottm F	24	14	6	4	40	21	48
Charlton	24	13	5	6	45	30	44
Sheff Utd	24	11	10	3	38	24	43
Sunderland	23	12	6	5	37	21	42
West Brom	24	12	4	8	28	23	40
Wolvrhmptn	24	11	6	7	30	26	39
Stockport	24	11	5	8	42	32	38
Swindon	24	11	5	8	32	34	38
Birmingham	24	9	8	7	25	19	35
Bradford	24	8	9	7	22	24	33
QPR	24	8	6	10	29	39	30
Norwich	24	8	6	10	24	34	30
Stoke	24	7	7	10	26	32	28
Reading	24	7	7	10	23	36	28
Ipswich	23	6	9	8	27	26	27
Oxford Utd	24	7	5	12	29	34	26
Port Vale	24	7	5	12	26	33	26
Crewe	24	7	3	14	27	39	24
Man City	24	6	6	12	26	28	24
Portsmth	23	6	5	12	29	37	23
Tranmere	23	6	5	12	28	34	23
Huddersfld	24	6	5	13	24	38	23
Bury	24	4	11	9	22	32	23

Second division

BOURNEMTH (1) 4 GILLINGHAM (0) 0
Jones 15, 88 5,672
Robinson 53
Young 78
Sent off: A Pennock (Gillingham) 18

BRENTFORD (1) 1 SOUTHEND (0) 1
Taylor 42 Coulbault 80
5,341
Sent off: S N'Diaye (Southend) 53

BRISTOL CITY (2) 4 MILLWALL (0) 1
Cramb 10 Veart 53
Edwards 17 16,128
Tinnion 59
Taylor 68

BURNLEY (0) 0 CHESTRFLD (0) 0
10,881

CARLISLE (1) 1 BLACKPOOL (0) 1
Stevens 15 Ormerod 53
8,010

LUTON (0) 2 NORTHMPTN (2) 2
Oldfield 67 Dozzell 8 (pen)
Thorpe 85 White 13 (og)
8,035

PLYMOUTH (1) 1 FULHAM (1) 4
Barlow 5 Moody 18, 80
9,469 Hayward 63
Trollope 75

PRESTON (0) 1 OLDHAM (1) 1
Holt 51 Hodgson 32
13,441

WALSALL (0) 0 BRISTOL R (0) 1
5,634 Beadle 48

WREXHAM (1) 2 WIGAN (1) 2
Owen 39 Smeets 22
Connolly 65 Kilford 71
4,577

WYCOMBE (0) 0 WATFORD (0) 0
6,090

YORK (0) 0 GRIMSBY (0) 0
7,093

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	24	16	6	2	38	15	54
Bristol City	24	16	4	4	44	19	52
Oldham	24	9	9	6	38	30	36
Northmptn	24	9	9	6	27	19	36
York	24	9	8	7	31	28	35
Millwall	23	10	5	8	29	28	35
Grimsby	23	9	8	6	28	18	35
Chestrfld	24	8	11	5	22	18	35
Bristol R	24	9	7	8	32	35	34
Fulham	24	9	7	8	25	26	34
Blackpool	24	9	6	9	33	37	33
Bournemth	24	8	9	7	28	24	33
Preston	*24*	*9*	*5*	*10*	30	24	32
Wrexham	23	7	10	6	29	28	31
Walsall	23	8	6	9	24	26	30
Wigan	23	8	5	10	36	35	29
Gillingham	24	7	7	10	27	36	28
Wycombe	24	6	9	9	30	35	27
Southend	24	7	6	11	28	44	27
Plymouth	24	5	9	10	29	35	24
Luton	23	5	8	10	25	37	23
Brentford	24	5	8	11	25	40	23
Burnley	24	4	9	11	23	34	21
Carlisle	24	5	5	14	27	43	20

Third division

BARNET (0) 2 PETERBORO (0) 0
Simpson 57 3,449
Devine 80

BRIGHTON (0) 4 COLCHESTER (3) 4
Emblen 47, 62, 66 Rankin 15, 28
Minton 86 (pen) Adcock 23
2,647 Stamps 73

CAMB UTD (0) 1 L ORIENT (0) 0
Wanless 47 4,808

CARDIFF (1) 1 EXETER (0) 1
Dale 10 Alman 82
6,623

DARLINGTON (1) 4 MACCLSFLD (0) 2
Naylor 45 De Vos 48 (og)
Oliver 55 Askey 90
Dorner 65, 73 3,042

HARTLPOOL (1) 3 SCARBORO (0) 0
Halliday 4, 68 3,905
Clark 87

HULL (0) 1 CHESTER (0) 2
Dewhurst 68 Whelan 82
6,807 Thomas 87

LINCOLN (0) 0 ROTHERHAM (0) 1
6,350 White 82

ROCHDALE (1) 3 SHRWSBURY (1) 1
Lancashire 40 Wilding 45
Painter 71 2,247
Bryson 90

SCUNTHRPE (1) 1 NOTTS CO (1) 2
Hendon 3 (og) Jones 6, 48
4,781

TORQUAY (0) 2 SWANSEA (0) 0
Hill 52 2,998
Roberts 80

POSTPONED: Doncaster v Mansfield (Pools panel verdict: Half-time: away win. Full-time: away win).

Leading positions

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Notts Co	24	13	8	3	38	24	47
Peterboro	24	11	10	3	44	22	43
Lincoln	24	11	8	5	25	23	41
Exeter	24	10	9	5	35	26	39
Rotherham	24	10	8	6	38	32	38
Barnet	24	11	5	8	36	30	38
Hartlpool	24	8	13	3	36	26	37
Scarboro	24	11	4	9	36	34	37
Chester	24	11	4	9	35	31	37
Torquay	24	10	7	7	34	32	37
L Orient	24	9	7	8	25	22	34
Macclsfld	23	8	9	6	32	27	33
Scunthrpe	23	9	6	8	30	30	33

Vauxhall Conference

CHELTENHAM (0) 2 YEOVIL (0) 0
Walker 66, 81 2,700

DOVER (0) 2 WELLING (0) 1
Ayorinde 66 Hanlon 70
Budden 89 (pen) 1,304
Sent off: A Dolby (Welling) 78

GATESHEAD (2) 2 HALIFAX (2) 2
Harkus 22, 35 Paterson 5
1,239 Horsfield 7

HEDNESFORD (1) 1 KETTERING (0) 1
Ware 16 Berry 71
1,911

HEREFORD (0) 1 KIDDRMNSTR (0) 0
Grayson 56 (pen) 4,671
Sent off: I Rodgerson (Hereford) 53

LEEK (1) *3* *TELFORD* (1) *1*
Biggins 29 Turner 30
Troll 58 832
Tobin 82

MORECAMBE (2) 2 SOUTHPORT (0) 0
Milner 8 2,150
Norman 36

NORTHWICH (0) 1 STALYBRIDGE (0) 0
Gardiner 84 1,340
Sent off: P Tait (Northwich) 77

RUSHDEN & D (0) 2 STEVENAGE (0) 0
West 67 3,527
Capone 90

SLOUGH (0) 0 HAYES (0) 0
1,219
Sent off: J Haynes (Hayes) 75

WOKING (0) *3* *FARNBOROUGH* (0) *0*
Danzey 66 4,124
Payne 87, 88 (pen)

Leading positions

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Halifax	22	14	6	2	46	22	48
Cheltenham	20	13	5	2	36	19	44
Morecambe	21	12	5	4	45	28	41
Hednesford	22	11	8	3	35	26	41
Rushden & D	23	13	2	8	40	34	41
Woking	22	11	7	4	39	21	40
Southport	21	9	6	6	36	27	33
Hayes	22	9	5	8	32	25	32
Yeovil	19	9	3	7	32	25	30
Hereford	21	8	6	7	28	27	30
Dover	21	9	3	9	32	38	30
Slough	20	7	6	7	29	26	27
Leek	22	6	8	8	31	34	26
Welling	20	7	4	9	29	34	25

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Gainsborough 0 Boston 1; Marine 0 Winsford 0; Radcliffe 0 Hyde 0.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: *Atherstone 2 Nuneaton 2*, Bath 3 Merthyr 0; Bromsgrove 2 Halesowen 2; Crawley 0 Hastings 0, Dorchester 1 Salisbury 0; Forest Green 1 Gloucester 1; Gresley 2 Burton 0; Rothwell 1 King's Lynn 2; Sittingbourne 3 Cambridge City 1, St *Leonards 4 Ashford 1 Worcester 3* Tamworth 1 Midland division: Bedworth 3 VS Rugby 3, Corby 1 Ilkeston 5; Hinckley 1 Sutton Coldfield Town 3, Moor Green 2 Redditch 0 Paget 0 Solihull Boro 3; RC Warwick 4 Evesham 0; Shepshed Dynamo *4 Blakenall 1 Stourbridge 0 Bilston 2*; Wisbech 1 Grantham 1 Postponed: Brackley v Raunds Southern division: Baldock 0 Chelmsford 2, Bashley 4 Weymouth 2; Clevedon 1 Weston-S-Mare 0; Dartford 2 Erith and Belvedere 1 *Newport AFC 2 Cinderford 1; Newport* (IoW) 2 Fareham 1; Tonbridge Angels 1 Margate 1; Waterlooville 3 Havant 2; Yate 5 Trowbridge 3 Postponed: Fisher v Fleet; Witney v Cirencester

INTERLINK EXPRESS ALLIANCE: Bridgnorth 4 *Shifnal T 0*; Chasetown 0 Pelsall V 0; Halesowen H 4 Oldbury U 3, Kings Norton 1 Boldmere St M 0; Knypersley V 0 Rocester 0; Pershore T 2 Stratford T 0, Sandwell 0 W Mid Police 1; Stapenhill 1 Barwell 4, Wednesfield 3 Willenhall 1 Postponed: Rushall O v Bloxwich Town

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Postponed: Hythe v Folkestone Invicta

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Burgess Hill 4 Hassocks 0, Pagham 0 Selsey 0 Postponed: Arundel v Littlehampton

ESSEX SENIOR LEAGUE: Premier division: Great Wakering 2 Southend Manor 1. Postponed: Bowers v Basildon, Concord v Hullbridge Sports, Stansted v Sawbridgeworth.

JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Clacton 1 Harwich *and Parkeston 3*, Fakenham 4 *Walton 0*; Great Yarmouth 1 Gorleston 1. Tiptree 2 Halstead 5.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: AFC Newbury 2 Thatcham 0 Totton 0 BAT 0; Aerostructures 0 Eastleigh 0; Bournemouth 3 Wimborne 1. Romsey 3 Christchurch 1

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Bideford 1 Barnstaple 3

LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth 3 Rhayader Town 2; Caernarfon 2 Porthmadog 2; Caersws 1 Newtown 2, Cemaes Ynys Mon 0 Bangor City 3, Flint Town 1 Connah's Quay 2, Haverfordwest 1 Ebbw Vale 4, Rhyl 0 Conwy 3 Postponed: *Welshpool v Total Network Solutions*

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Ballymena 2 Coleraine 2, Glentoran 1 Linfield 1; Portadown 2 Glenavon 0. Postponed: Cliftonville v Crusaders First division: Carrick 0 Bangor 2.

FAI HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Bohemians 1 Derry 0.

POOLS CHECK

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
1	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	1	3
1	3	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	3	1	3	1	3	2	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1

FORECASTS: Half-time: nine score draws and 19 no-score draws; no claims required — winnings sent automatically — forecast is good. Full time: 12 score draws and five no-score draws; forecast is low

Halifax lead cut by ageless Walker

Non-League Football by Walter Gammie

IT LOOKED plain sailing for Halifax Town, the Vauxhall Conference leaders, when Geoff Horsefield first released Jamie Paterson to score off the post and then, 90 seconds later, drove in his 21st goal of the season within seven minutes of the start of their match against Gateshead at the International Stadium. Yet by half-time, the bottom-placed club had drawn level with two goals by Steve Harkus and it stayed that way to the finish.

Cheltenham Town, extending their unbeaten Conference run to 16 matches, duly closed the gap to four points with two matches in hand by beating Yeovil Town 2-0 at Whaddon Road. Clive Walker, 40, and still going strong, scored both goals in the second half, the first from a free kick and the second when putting away a cross by Dale Watkins.

Although Hednesford Town were held 1-1 at home by lowly *Kettering Town, for whom* Steve Berry, the player-manager, scored an equaliser in the second half, Morecambe, Rushden and Diamonds and Woking all strengthened their challenge with home victories.

Goals by Andy Milner and John Norman put Morecambe back on a winning track against Southport and Colin West, on loan from Leyton Orient, and Julien Caponee brought Rushden their fourth successive win, against Stevenage. Woking were given the breakthrough by Michael Danzey against Farnborough Town and Grant Payne supplied a late flourish with two goals in two minutes.

The biggest crowd of the day — and the Vauxhall Conference season — was at Edgar Street, where 4,671 watched Hereford United overcome Kidderminster Harriers 1-0 in their first league meeting for 39 years. No sooner had Hereford had Ian Rodgerson sent off in the 53rd minute than they scored the all-important goal, Neil Grayson blasting home a penalty.

DANNY BAKER
IS ON HOLIDAY

هكذا من الأصل

RUGBY UNION: BENTLEY'S MEMORABLE TRY AGAINST GAUTENG MAY NOT SAVE HIS INTERNATIONAL CAREER

Lion with points to prove

DAVID HANDS

If you want the vicarious thrill of knowing how a professional sportsman feels, of sharing his doubts and fears, cast a glance at the justly praised video, *Living with Lions*. In particular, look at the build-up to the first international that the British Isles played against South Africa, in Cape Town last summer.

The gaunt face that stares back at the camera is that of John Bentley, bristle-haired, drawn, the face of a man who wants so much to be part of the international XV and who fears that he may not be. Bentley was right: he prowled the corridors of the Newlands Holiday Inn as dawn was breaking, eagerly awaiting the letter from the management that all the playing party received informing them of their selection.

He opened it in private, spirits soaring as he read the word "Congratulations", only to find them sinking when he read on to find that he was a replacement. It took Bentley two days before he could again pick up the camcorder with which he was recording the tour party's private moments, two days to come to terms with his disappointment.

In many ways Bentley, now 31, became one of the icons of the tour, in part for his obvious pride and pleasure in sharing the Lions' odyssey, in part for his Yorkshire down-to-earthness and for "that" try — the try he scored against Gauteng Lions one thundery evening in Johannesburg that ranks among the best scored by any Lion, any time, anywhere.

Bentley did not realise just how much of a public face he had become until he visited Bath with Newcastle, his club, for the opening Allied Dunbar Premiership first division match of this season. A rib injury had prevented him from playing, but, as a television summariser for the afternoon, he found a swarm of eager young autograph-hunters waiting for him where, a year earlier, he might have gone virtually unnoticed.

"The tour had been difficult, like nothing I had experienced in my life, through the standards we achieved and the attention we received," Bentley said. "We half-expected it in South Africa but when we came home, it was here, too. It was hard to handle. I pride myself on keeping my feet on the ground and my wife, Sandy, must take a lot of credit for that, but it was difficult having to talk to loads of people who would never have bothered to talk to you before."

Bentley even found himself attracting the attention of publishers. After the Lions tour ended and he was in Sydney with England for the ill-fated game against Australia in July, he was approached to make a brief contribution to a tour memoir; after a series of interviews, he found that he had taken over the entire project, underpinned by the tour diary that he had kept entirely for his own satisfaction and that of the family that forms the mainspring of his life — his wife, his son, Lloyd, 7, and daughters, Millie, 5, and Faye, nine months. The diary is the central thread of *Lions Uncaged*.

RAOUL DIXON

Breaking barriers: Bentley, an international in both codes, has become a household name after the successful Lions tour

Typical, some of his tour colleagues might suggest. In essence, Bentley is a competitor: he played football, both codes of rugby and cricket in his native Cleckheaton. "I've never had anything given me. What I've had is through hard work and commitment to the job," he said.

He played for Otley and Sale, as a centre, and was capped twice by England on the wing in 1988, at the age of 21; inevitably he moved to rugby league, with Leeds, where he worked as a policeman. Inevitably, because as a boy he had stood on the terraces watching rugby league. "I was always going to be a rugby league player, not for the money but because I wanted to play at professional level," he said.

Far enough, given that during his career with Leeds and Halifax he played for Great Britain before rugby union embraced professionalism and Bentley, while still with Halifax, joined the emerging Newcastle side. He scored 25 tries in their destruction of nearly every other second-division club, won selection for the Lions but this season has been like a yo-yo, made up of highs and lows with which several other Lions would identify.

"I had a frustrating injury which took some time to get over and Newcastle [who contributed five players to the Lions] wanted to make sure that we were all back in club mode. That was fair enough, but I became frustrated that we couldn't just walk back in and play the brand of rugby we had played in South Africa. I got a bit emotional and said some things in private that you wouldn't normally say.

"I came back to Newcastle after the four autumn internationals, got my head down and worked hard to make sure I regained a regular place. My wife tells me I won't play representative rugby again, purely because of the ages she sees in the international programmes, but I have such a strong belief in my own game. If you can show me a wing who can run round me ten times out of ten and who is fitter than me, maybe I'd step aside."

One of the autumnal highs was selection for England against South Africa, Bentley's fourth cap but his first at Twickenham; ironically he was replaced during that game by Austin Healey, a player with whom he identifies strongly. One of his new year challenges is to re-establish his international credentials, ahead of Healey, David Rees, Adedayo Adebayo and Tony Underwood, his club colleague.

"I hope to remain involved, with Newcastle and England, but I'll reassess things at the end of the rugby union season, when my club contract ends. I'll be realistic, I'll know if the time has come for a change."

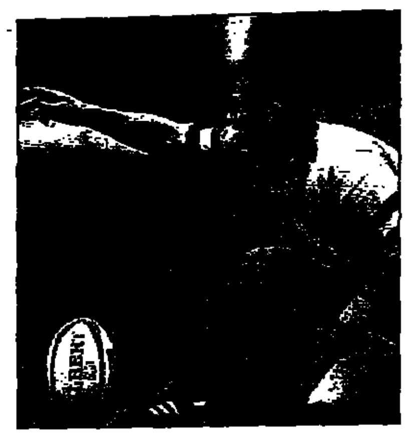
Perry gets vote as Callard kicks his heels

By Mark Souster

A WEEK ago Jon Callard's goalkicking ensured that Bath reached the final of the Heineken Cup but, as others have found in the past, reputations count for nothing at the Recreation Ground. As the club seeks to restore some impetus to its faltering domestic challenge, beginning today against Sale at Heywood Road, Callard has been replaced by Matt Perry, the 20-year-old who established himself as the England full back in the autumn.

Despite kicking five penalty goals against Pau, Callard is on the replacements' bench, as is Victor Ubogu, the scorer of the Bath try last Saturday, who is dropped in favour of John Mallett. Perry has played the past two games at centre and is one of four changes, two of them of a positional nature, made by Andy Robinson, the coach, as Bath look to improve on an unaccustomed eighth place in the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division.

Mike Catt partners Phil de Glanville in midfield, with Rich Butland, who is on the transfer list, coming in at fly half, while in the pack Brian Cusack replaces Germán Llanes at lock. The game today is the first in a potentially decisive batch of four league matches with Northampton, Richmond and Newcastle all looming on the horizon, a schedule that will force the club to rotate its squad. To date Bath have lost three of their six league games, the most recent of which was a record 50-23 defeat by Saracens.



Callard's reputation counts for little

An 11-5 defeat away to Sale in April ended Bath's hopes of preventing Wasps from winning the league last season, but the champions have endured a spectacular fall from grace. They stand tenth in the table and last won in the league on August 30. On present form they will not relish a trip to a resurgent Northampton, winners of their past two away games, although they have only won once at home this season.

Wasps clinched the title at Franklins Gardens last season and today welcome back Will Green after injury, adding the locks, Damian Cronin and Simon Shaw, and the flanker, Buster White, to their pack, which will be sorely tested by Northampton's heavyweight forwards.

Shaw said: "We are not performing when it matters. This season we haven't strung anything together, while our defence has proved poor in comparision with the title-winning campaign."

In contrast, Ian McGeechan, the Northampton director of rugby, has been delighted with the club's turnaround, most recently at Richmond, where, despite being outscored three tries to nil, Paul Grayson kicked them to victory.

McGeechan said: "Ideally I would like us to return to try-scoring mode, but Grayson is kicking so well that any side conceding penalties against us is likely to pay a price." Northampton are unchanged with Ian Hunter, having returned to fitness, among the replacements.

For their part, Richmond travel to Gloucester for their fourth league match in 14 days. John Kingston, the director of rugby, is toying with his options in the back row and at scrum half, where either Agustin Pichot or Andy Moore will play. Still smarting from their first home defeat in two years last week, Kingston has been drumming into his side the need to play to the referee.

"We simply have to learn the importance of meeting the referee's requirements, otherwise we risk a repeat of the Northampton episode," he said. Gloucester are without the Saint-Andre brothers — Philippe is injured and Raphael dropped. Audley Lumsden and Brian Johnson, their new signing from Newbury, are paired on the wing.

After a narrow European Conference semi-final defeat by Agen, Newcastle aim to keep the pressure on Saracens at the top of the table and should do so at the expense of Bristol, who have won only once this season. Newcastle are on the crest of a wave, having won their past 12 games in succession, and may recall Jim Naylor at the expense of either John Bentley or Tony Underwood.

Harlequins, beaten by Leicester last week, should restore normal service against London Irish.

SAILING

Brindabella set back by sea change

THE Swedish maxi, *Nicorette*, powered past *Brindabella*, of Australia, to lead the fleet of 114 in the early stages of the Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race yesterday.

Nicorette, skippered by Ludde Ingvall, overtook *Brindabella* about two hours after the start of the 630-mile race. *Brindabella* had swept out of Sydney Harbour under spinnaker ahead of *Nicorette* and the Hong Kong pocket maxi, *Exile*.

Northeasterly winds of about ten knots at the start freshened to 25 knots, allowing *Nicorette* to use her superior downwind speed and overtake Brindabella.

Marchioness, a former South African maxi sailed by an Australian syndicate, took over third place, just astern of *Brindabella*, the firm favourite. The 23-metre maxi has twice finished second and twice withdrawn with broken gear in the past four years. Her owner, George Snow, faced a nervous night as the fleet sailed into heavy seas, similar to those of last year when *Brindabella* was dismasted.

The China team of *Exile*, *Beau Geste* and *Hi Fidelity* lead the nine-race Southern Cross Cup team series, of which the Sydney-to-Hobart race is the final leg.

The Australian yacht, *Weowna Winner*, was the first race casualty, forced out after a collision with a spectator craft.

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
Pools coupon numbers in brackets

Bell's Scottish League
Premier division
(40) Aberdeen v Motherwell
(41) Dunfermline v Hearts
(42) Hibernian v Kilmarnock
(43) Rangers v Dundee Utd
(44) *St Johnstone v Celtic*

First division
(45) Airdrie v St Mirren
(46) Ayr v Greenock Morton
(47) Dundee v Falkirk
(48) Hamilton v Partick
(49) Stirling v Raith

Second division
(—) Clydebank v Clyde
(—) *Forfar v Brechin*
(—) Inverness CT v East Fife
(—) Stenhousemuir v Livingston
(—) Stranraer v Queen of South

Third division
(—) Berwick v Dumbarton
(—) Cowdenbeath v Ross County
(—) East Stirling v Alloa
(—) Montrose v Arbroath
(—) Queen's Park v Albion

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Ashford v Rothwell; Cambridge City v Forest Green; Gloucester v Gresley; Merthyr v Worcester City; Nuneaton v Sittingbourne; Salisbury v St Leonards. Southern division: Cinderford v Witney; *Fareham v Tonbridge Angels*; Fleet T v Clevedon; Havant v Newport AFC; Margate v Bashley; Weston-super-Mare v Waterlooville; Weymouth v Dartford. Midland division: Bilston v Moor Green; Redditch v Stourbridge; Solihull Boro v Wisbech Town; Stafford v Bedworth.

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Alfreton v Bishop Auckland; Altrincham v Leigh RMI; Bamber Bridge v Accrington Stanley; Frickley v Emley; Guiseley v Blyth Spartans; Lancaster v Barrow; Runcorn v Colwyn Bay. First division: Ashton United v Droylsden; Belper Town v Eastwood Town; Great Harwood v Bradford Pk Ave; Lincoln United v Farsley Celtic; Stocksbridge PS v Worksop; Trafford v Flixton; Whitley Bay v Gretna; Whitby v Harrogate Town; *Workington v Netherfield*.

RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Chesham v Aylesbury; Dulwich v Kingstonian; Enfield v Boreham Wood; Gravesend and Northfleet v Bromley; Hendon v Harrow; Heybridge v Bishop's Stortford; Oxford City v Basingstoke; Purfleet v Dagenham and Redbridge; St Albans v Hitchin; Sutton United v Carshalton; Yeading v Walton and Hersham. *First division:* Abingdon Town v Thame United; Aldershot Town v Wokingham; Barton Rovers v Berkhamsted; Billericay v Grays; Bognor Regis v Worthing; Chertsey v Staines; Croydon v Molesey; Hampton v Maidenhead; Leyton Pennant v Romford; Uxbridge v Wembley; Whyteleafe v Leatherhead. Second division: Braintree v Wivenhoe; Edgware v Cheshunt; Egham v Windsor and Eton; Horsham v Banstead; Hungerford v Bracknell; Leighton Town v Bedford T; *Marlow v Chalfont St Peter*; Northwood v Wealdstone; Tilbury v Barking; Tooting and Mitcham v Met Police; Witham v Canvey Island. Third division: Corinthian-Casuals v Camberley Town; East Thurrock v Aveley; Epsom and Ewell v Croydon; Flackwell Heath v H Hempstead; *Ford United v Clapton*; *Harlow v Hornchurch*; Hertford v Ware; Kingsbury v Wingate and Finchley; Lewes v Dorking; Southall v Tring.

COMPLETE MUSIC HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Abingdon v Bicester; Banbury v North Leigh; Burnham v Kintbury; Carterton v Endsleigh; Fairford v Shortwood; Hallen v Almondsbury; Swindon Supermarine v Highworth; Tuffley v Harrow Hill; Wantage v Didcot.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Chatham v Sheppey (2.15); Corinthian v Slade Green; Cray v Erith (2.15); Crockenhill v Swanley Furness (2.15); *Faversham v Ramsgate*; Greenwich v Thamesmead (2.15); Lordswood v Canterbury (2.15); Tunbridge Wells v Herne Bay; VCD v Beckenham (2.15); Whitstable Town v Deal.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: First division: Hailsham v Ringmer; Langney Sports v Eastbourne Town; Mile Oak v Whitehawk; Peacehaven and Telscombe v Saltdean; Portfield v Chichester; Redhill v Horsham YMCA; Wick v Shoreham.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier division: Bridport v Chard; Chippenham v Calne; Keynsham v Brislington; Mangotsfield United v Bristol Manor Farm; Melksham v Westbury; Paulton R v Odd Down; Taunton v Bridgwater; Tiverton v Elmore; Torrington v Backwell.

MINERVA SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE: Senior division: Ampthill v Mercedes Benz; Caddington v Holmer Green; Houghton v New Bradwell; *Leverstock Green v Shillington*; Risborough v Biggleswade; Stony Stratford v Kent; The 61 FC v Winslow; Totternhoe v Tring.

ENDSLEIGH MIDLAND COMBINATION: Premier division: Alvechurch v Studley BKL; Solihull Swifts v Meir KA; Cheslyn Hay v David Lloyd AFC; Coleshill v Continental Star; *Dudley Sports v Bilston Community College*; Handrahan Timbers v Worcestero; Highgate v Knowle; Massey Ferguson v Southam; Wellesbourne v Kenilworth.

COURAGE COMBINED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Ash v Farnham; Bedfont v Feltham; *Chessington and Hook v Westfield*; Chipstead v Merstham; Cobham v Viking Sports; Cranleigh v Godalming and Guildford; Hartley Wintney v Reading Town; Netherne v Raynes Park Vale; Sandhurst v Cove; Walton Casuals v Ashford.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Atherton Collieries v Atherton LR; Burscough v Nantwich Town; Chadderton v Rossendale; Clitheroe v Blackpool Rovers; *Holker Old Boys v Darwen*; Maine Road v Salford; Mossley v Glossop North End; Newcastle Town v Kidsgrove; Ramsbottom v Haslingden; St Helens v Prescot Cables; Warrington v Vauxhall GM.

BANKS'S BREWERY LEAGUE: Premier division: Bloxwich S v Wolverhampton C; *Brierley Hill T v Lye Town*; Cradley Town v Ettingshall; Darlaston v Bustleholme; Ludlow T v Kington Town; Tividale v Gornal A; Walsall Wood v Stafford T; Westfields v Malvern T; Wolverhampton v Stourport S.

JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Diss v Stowmarket; Lowestoft v Wroxham; Newmarket v Bury Town; Soham v Ely; Sudbury v Sudbury; Warboys v Histon; *Woodbridge Town v Felixstowe P and T*.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Brockenhurst v Lymington; Downton v Bemerton Heath; East Cowes v Cowes Sports; Gosport v Portsmouth; Whitchurch v Andover.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Cogenhoe v Northampton Spencer; Ford Sports v Long Buckby; Holbeach v Boston; Kempston v Wootton; *Spalding v Bourne*; Stotfold v Potton; Wellingborough v Desborough; Yaxley v S and L Corby.

INTERLINK EXPRESS ALLIANCE: Barwell v Oldbury; Bloxwich Town v Pelsall V; Knypersley V v Kings Norton; Rocester v Halesowen H; Rushall O v Shifnal T; Sandwell v Wednesfield; W Mid Police v Stapenhill; Willenhall v Pershore T.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: *Premier division:* Armthorpe Welfare v Denaby; Brigg Town v Glasshoughton Welfare; Eccleshill v Curzon Ashton; Maltby MW v Hatfield Main; Ossett Albion v Ossett Town; Pickering v Hucknall Town; Pontefract Cols v North Ferriby; Selby v Thackley; Sheffield v Liversedge.

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTH LEAGUE: First division: Consett v Easington; Durham v Crook; Murton v Dunston Federation; RTM Newcastle v Penrith; Seaham Red Star v Stockton; Tow Law v Shildon.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Carmarthen Town v Cwmbran (2.30); Inter Cable-Tel v Barry (2.30).

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Ards v Omagh. First division: Ballyclare v Larne; *Dungannon Swifts v Limavady United*; Newry v Distillery.

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Finn Harps v Dundalk (7.30); *Sligo v Drogheda (7.30)*.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Brora v Wick Academy; *Deveronvale v Buckie Thistle*; Fort William v Clachnacuddin; Fraserburgh v Peterhead; Huntly v Cove; Lossiemouth v Elgin; Nairn County v Forres Mechanics; Rothes v Keith.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Silk Cut Challenge Cup
Second round
Charleston v Saddleworth (2.0)

Second round replay
Leigh Miners v Walney Central (2.0)

Club match
Huddersfield v Warrington (2.30)

HOCKEY

DICK HOLLANDS MEMORIAL MATCH: Cheam President's XI v Cheam (*at London Transport ground, North Cheam, noon*).

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Birmingham Bullets v Newcastle Eagles (7.30).

ICE HOCKEY: Express Cup: Newcastle Cobras v Ayr Scottish Eagles (6.30); Manchester Storm v Bracknell Bees (7.0); Nottingham Panthers v Basingstoke Bison (7.0).

LACROSSE: Shepherds Friendly Society League: Premier division: Stockport v Boardman and Eccles; Hulmeians v Cheadle; Poynton v Heaton Mersey; Timperley v Sheffield Univ; Old Waconians v Mellor.

RUGBY UNION

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Allied Dunbar Premiership
First division
Bristol v Newcastle (2.0)
Gloucester v Richmond
Harlequins v London Irish
Northampton v Wasps
Sale v Bath

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saracens	8	7	0	1	216	125	14
Newcastle	6	6	0	0	180	109	12
Leicester	7	5	0	2	191	134	10
Richmond	8	4	0	4	187	159	8
Harlequins	7	4	0	3	187	188	8
Sale	7	3	0	4	232	201	6
Northampton	*7*	*3*	*0*	*4*	*153*	*141*	*6*
Bath	6	3	0	3	176	169	6
Gloucester	6	2	0	4	147	149	4
Wasps	5	1	0	4	109	153	2
London Irish	6	1	0	5	90	190	2
Bristol	7	1	0	6	92	252	2

Second division
Fylde v Bedford (2.0)
Moseley v Rotherham

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bedford	11	11	0	0	367	170	22
L Scottish	12	8	0	4	300	226	16
Orrell	11	7	0	4	257	177	14
Waterloo	12	7	0	5	290	255	14
W Hartlepool	11	7	0	4	259	224	14
Coventry	12	7	0	5	221	303	14
Moseley	11	6	0	5	214	215	12
Rotherham	11	5	0	6	263	214	10
Blackheath	12	5	0	7	270	289	10
Exeter	12	3	0	9	196	292	6
Wakefield	12	2	0	10	203	290	4
Fylde	11	1	0	10	148	321	2

Jewson National League
First division
Harrogate v Wharfedale (2.15)
Leeds v Worcester
London Welsh v Rosslyn Park (2.15)
Morley v Otley
Nottingham v Newbury
Reading v Lydney (2.15)
Rugby v Liverpool St Helens

Second division north
Hinckley v Sedgley Park (2.30)
Lichfield v Preston Grasshoppers (2.30)
Nuneaton v Manchester (2.30)
Sandal v Kendal (2.15)
Sheffield v Birmingham/Solihull (2.30)
Walsall v Aspatria (2.30)
Winnington Park v Stourbridge (2.30)

Second division south
Cheltenham v North Walsham (2.30)
Esher v Bridgwater (2.15)
Henley v Clifton (2.0)
Met Police v Havant
Plymouth v Camberley (2.30)
Tabard v Barking (2.15)
Weston-super-Mare v Redruth

Welsh League
Premier division
Bridgend v Ebbw Vale (2.0)
Llanelli v Cardiff (2.0)
Neath v Newport (2.0)
Swansea v Pontypridd (6.0)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	T	B	Pts
Swansea	6	5	0	1	228	105	31	5	20
Pontypridd	6	4	1	1	193	97	25	5	18
Cardiff	6	4	1	1	170	135	17	1	14
Llanelli	6	3	0	3	165	133	20	2	11
Ebbw Vale	6	3	0	3	117	175	13	1	10
Bridgend	6	2	1	3	111	228	12	0	7
Neath	6	1	1	4	138	188	17	1	5
Newport	6	0	0	6	112	173	10	1	1

First division
Aberavon v Treorchy (2.0)
Bonymaen v Pontypool (2.0)
Cross Keys v Llandovery (2.0)
Maesteg v Abertillery (2.30)
Merthyr v Newbridge (2.0)
South Wales Police v Rumney (2.0)
Cardiff Inst v Dunvant (2.0)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	T	B	Pts
Caerphilly	17	15	0	2	625	272	79	11	58
Aberavon	18	12	2	2	451	262	65	8	46
Treorchy	*16*	*11*	*0*	*5*	*429*	*280*	*61*	*8*	*41*
SW Police	16	8	0	8	420	322	61	8	32
Merthyr	16	8	3	5	305	286	45	3	30
Llandovery	16	8	0	8	324	283	40	4	28
Dunvant	16	7	1	8	336	398	37	3	25
Bonymaen	16	7	0	9	280	261	36	3	24
Cross Keys	16	7	1	8	302	322	31	2	24
Abertillery	16	7	1	8	274	321	33	2	24
Newbridge	16	7	0	9	270	327	27	3	24
Blackwood	17	7	0	10	299	438	39	2	23
Cardiff Inst	16	4	0	12	359	459	49	9	21
Rumney	15	6	1	8	303	405	37	1	20
Maesteg	15	5	0	10	271	392	28	1	16
Pontypool	16	4	1	11	283	605	35	1	14

SECOND DIVISION: Abercynon v St Peter's; Pyle v Tondu; Kenfig Hill v Ystradgynlais; Mountain Ash v Whitland; Llanharan v Tenby United; Narberth v Tredegar.

Tennents Premiership
First division
Edinburgh Acads v Stirling County (2.0)
Jed-Forest v Currie (2.0)
Melrose v Hawick (2.0)
Watsonians v Boroughmuir (2.0)
West of Scotland v Heriot's FP (2.0)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	T	B	Pts
Melrose	4	4	0	0	100	40	0	2	18
Watsonians	4	3	0	1	137	48	0	2	14
Stirling Co	*4*	*3*	*0*	*1*	*82*	*52*	*0*	*1*	*13*
W of Scot	3	2	0	1	80	22	0	2	10
Jed-Forest	4	2	0	2	72	109	0	1	9
Hawick	3	1	0	2	44	59	0	0	4
Boroughmuir	3	1	0	2	26	50	0	0	4
Edinburgh A	3	0	0	3	25	75	0	1	1
Heriot's FP	2	0	0	2	27	68	0	0	0
Currie	*2*	*0*	*0*	*2*	*14*	*64*	*0*	*0*	*0*

Second division
Biggar v Gala (2.0)
Dundee HSFP v Peebles (2.0)
Kelso v Glasgow Hawks (2.0)
Kilmarnock v Kirkcaldy (2.0)
Preston Lodge v Musselburgh (2.0)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	T	B	Pts
Glasgow H	4	4	0	0	138	40	0	3	19
Kelso	4	3	0	1	102	56	0	2	14
Gala	4	3	0	1	97	61	0	2	14
Kirkcaldy	4	2	0	2	79	72	0	1	9
Kilmarnock	*4*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*67*	*70*	*0*	*1*	*9*
Peebles	4	1	1	2	62	60	0	2	8
Biggar	4	2	0	2	78	111	0	0	8
Dundee	3	1	0	2	49	81	0	2	6
Musselburgh	3	0	1	2	26	53	0	1	3
Preston L	4	0	0	4	33	125	0	0	0

Third division
Aberdeen GSFP v Glenrothes (2.0)
Glasgow Southern v Ayr (2.0)
Gordonians v Selkirk (2.0)
Grangemouth v Hillhead/Jordanhill (2.0)
Stewart's Mel FP v Stewartry (2.0)

TOMORROW

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
** denotes all-ticket match*
Pools coupon numbers in brackets

FA Carling Premiership
(1) Barnsley v Derby
(2) Blackburn v Crystal Palace
(3) Coventry v Manchester Utd
(4) Everton v Bolton
(5) Leeds v Aston Villa
(6) Leicester v Sheffield Wed
(-) Newcastle v Liverpool (5.0)
(7) Tottenham v Arsenal
(8) Wimbledon v West Ham

Nationwide League
First division
(9) Birmingham v Tranmere
(10) Bradford v Huddersfield
(11) Bury v Crewe
(12) Man City v Nottingham Forest
(13) Middlesbrough v Stockport
(14) * Oxford Utd v Sunderland
(15) Port Vale v Wolverhampton (1.0)
(16) QPR v Reading
(17) Sheffield Utd v Charlton (1.0)
(18) Swindon v Ipswich
(19) West Bromwich v Stoke

INTERLINK EXPRESS ALLIANCE: Boldmere St M v Bridgnorth.

Second division
(20) Blackpool v Wrexham
(21) Bristol Rovers v Bournemouth
(22) Chesterfield v York
(23) Fulham v Bristol City (noon)
(24) Grimsby v Preston (1.0)
(25) Millwall v Luton
(26) Northampton v Walsall (noon)
(27) *Oldham v Burnley (1.0)*
(28) Southend v Wycombe (noon)
(29) Watford v Plymouth
(30) * *Wigan v Carlisle (noon)*

Third division
(31) Chester v Scunthorpe
(32) Exeter v Torquay (11.0)
(33) Leyton Orient v Doncaster
(34) Macclesfield v Rochdale
(35) *Mansfield v Lincoln (noon)*
(36) Notts County v Hartlepool
(37) Peterborough v Brighton
(38) Rotherham v Hull (noon)
(39) Scarborough v Darlington
(—) Shrewsbury v Cardiff (noon)
(—) Swansea v Barnet

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Burton Albion v Bromsgrove; Hastings v Bath; King's Lynn v Atherstone. Southern division: *Chelmsford v Newport (IoW)*; Cirencester Town v Baldock; Erith and Belvedere v Yate. Midland division: Blakenall v Hinckley Utd; Evesham v Brackley Town; Raunds T v Shepshed D; Sutton Coldfield Town v Corby; VS Rugby v RC Warwick.

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: *Premier division: Cork v Shelbourne (2.0)*; Shamrock v Kilkenny; UCD v St Patrick's Ath (3.15).

RUGBY LEAGUE

Silk Cut Challenge Cup
Second round
Myton Warriors v Norland (11.0)

CLUB MATCH: Bramley v Hunslet (noon)

BURTONWOOD BREWERY LANCASHIRE CUP: Final: Waterhead v Wigan Rose Br (at Saddleworth Rangers, 2.0)

JENNINGS CUMBRIA CUP: Final: Broughton RR v Ellenborough (at Derwent Park, Workington, 1.0)

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Chester Jets v London Towers (6.30); Manchester Giants v Leopards (6.30); Newcastle Eagles v Watford Royals (5.30); Sheffield Sharks v Crystal Palace (6.0).

ICE HOCKEY: Express Cup: Ayr Scottish Eagles v Manchester Storm (6.30); Sheffield Steelers v Bracknell Bees (6.30); Basingstoke Bison v Newcastle Cobras (6.0).

Scotland to bring back trial game

By Kevin Ferrie

SCOTLAND'S selectors are to reintroduce the international trial match at Myreside, in Edinburgh, on January 7. It will be confined to home-based players and will take place three days after the deciding round of inter-district championship matches, which double as qualifying ties for European competition next year.

"This trial will give the selectors a chance to assess players before the Scotland and Scotland A matches at the end of January," Jim Telfer, the national director of rugby, said. "It also gives players the opportunity to make an impression."

That hardly addresses the reasons why the trial was scrapped after last being played four years ago. It allowed close rivals to be compared but there was minimal preparation time and it did not indicate how individuals would fit into the national team's framework.

The five nations' championship warm-up with Italy takes place on January 24, the weekend of the Tetley's Bitter Cup fifth round in England. Several clubs still in that competition have contenders for Scotland places in their squads and although the Scottish Rugby Union has dismissed speculation that several key exiles may not be available for the Italy game, there could be a conflict of interest.

Richie Dixon, the national coach, has announced that "every position is there to be competed for". But whether a trial is the best arena for that particular competition remains to be seen.

هكذا من الإهمال

RUGBY UNION: PREMIERSHIP LEADERS GO DOWN TO THEIR FIRST DEFEAT

PHOTOGRAPHS. DES JENSON

Pienaar, the former South Africa captain, is upended as he leads a Saracens attack in the desperately close match with Leicester

Saracens toppled by Stransky

Saracens 21
Leicester 22

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

JOEL STRANSKY has dropped some significant goals in his time — notably that which won the World Cup in Johannesburg two years ago — but yesterday, in the more prosaic surrounds of Watford, his goal in the eightieth minute brought to an end the unbeaten record that has taken Saracens to the top of the Allied Dunbar Premiership.

Now only one victorious run remains, that of Newcastle, who play Bristol today and have to travel to Leicester on Tuesday for another game which could well match the intensity and aggression which characterised, and at times disfigured, yesterday's match.

Yet the exchanges which brought four yellow cards, two for each club, in the first quarter were long forgotten by the time the game reached its nail-biting climax in front of 14,291 spectators, by far the biggest crowd Saracens have attracted. With 12 minutes left the scores were level at 16-16; with nine minutes remaining a delightful try by Richard Wallace suggested that Saracens were poised for victory.

Yet neither side had controlled the game in the way they wanted: Saracens, keen to win quick rucked ball and play wide, could not do so while Leicester, time after time, turned over possession and, when they retained it, played through their back row and the high balls of Stransky. Never were Leicester's failings more evident than when Lloyd was stripped in midfield, leaving Bracken and Bennett to send Wallace 40 metres to the line.

But Bob Dwyer, Leicester's director of rugby, seized the moment to send on fresh legs, two forward replacements helping carry the game to Saracens and earn first territory, then points. With four minutes remaining Stransky reduced the margin to two points with a simple penalty goal and then watched his pack win three successive rucks before dropping from 30 metres the goal that won the match.

Amazingly it was Leicester's first away win in league rugby for nearly a year, nor was there any great style to their display. In the middle of a demanding run, they are not concerned about pleasantries. "We wanted to take them on up front," Dwyer said. "We have the best pack since I have been at the club. There was no way we could do it easy."

Nor did they. Johnson and Grewcock received the first set of matching yellow cards after a brawl and Rowntree and Paul Wallace received the second set after a series of mean-tempered scrums and it took the two teams until the interval to work some seasonal indigestion from their systems.

At times, Leicester's defence was near to breaking, notably when Pienaar himself strode through just after half-time and again when the South African was mown down by a wonderful cover tackle from Garforth.

At the heart of Saracens' efforts, too, was Diprose, their captain, a consistent provider of lineout ball and a deft handler in the loose. As Lynagh and Stransky exchanged penalties, Diprose wound up his forwards so as to allow his half backs to take control of the game in a way that Leicester, with Serevi enduring a difficult day at scrum half, could not.

Lynagh dropped the 20-metre goal which gave his team the edge at the interval but Leicester roared into the second half, coaxing a penalty award after Pienaar fisted away Back's offending hand at a scrum near the Saracens' line.

Stransky accepted the chance to level and then sent into orbit, the kick which Gavin Johnson, another of the four South Africa internationals involved, could not gather. Rowntree drove from the ruck, Stransky looked for the gap and sent van Heerden careering to the line for the game's first try, which also seemed to break some ice.

Saracens' response, though it took some time, seemed definitive: sleight of hand between Diprose and Bracken opened the way for Constable. The Australian swerved between two defenders and past Leeds before outpacing Healey. A nerveless conversion from touch by Lynagh pulled the scores level once more.

When, three minutes later, Wallace scored from a similar distance of 40 metres, Saracens were set fair and would have been even better off had Lynagh not pulled the far easier conversion wide. As matters turned out it was an expensive miss. Leicester, who have known some disappointments themselves in the closing stages of big matches — notably cup finals — gritted their teeth. Their six points in four minutes earned them their first away win over Saracens in three years and has made life at the top of the table that much more interesting.

SCORERS: Saracens: Tries: Constable (68min), R Wallace (71). Conversion: Lynagh. Penalty goals: Lynagh 2 (5, 26). Dropped goal: Lynagh (33). Leicester: Try: Van Heerden (55). Conversion: Stransky. Penalty goals: Stransky 4 (8, 24, 42, 76). Dropped goal: Stransky (80).
SCORING SEQUENCE (Saracens first): 3-0, 3-3, 3-6, 6-6, 9-6 (half-time), 9-9, 9-16, 16-16, 21-16, 21-19, 21-22.

SARACENS: G Johnson (rep: M Singer, 38-40min, 78); R Wallace, R Constable, S Ravenscroft, B Daniel; M Lynagh, K Bracken, R Grau (rep: A Olver, 63), G Chuter, P Wallace, P Johns, D Grewcock, A Bennett (rep: B Sturnham, 79), F Pienaar, A Diprose

LEICESTER: A Leeds; A Healey, J Overend, S Potter, L Lloyd; J Stransky, W Serevi; G Rowntree (rep: P Freshwater, 72), R Cockerill, D Garforth, M Johnson, F van Heerden, M Corry (rep: D Addison, 72), N Back, E Miller (rep. L Moody, 54)

Referee: E Morrison (Bristol).

Stransky, clutching the ball, hails the final whistle

TIMES RUGBY UNION STATISTICS

OFFENCE

This table ranks clubs in the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division in terms of most points, tries and penalty goals scored. The fourth category is the percentage of matches in which they have scored tries. The best overall side in attack is calculated by averaging every club's performance in each category. The figure in brackets denotes clubs' rankings in the individual categories.

	Pts	Tries	Pens	Tries sc'd	Overall
1 Bath	29.16 (3)	3.33 (3)	3.00 (4)	100 (1)	2.75
Sale	33.14 (1)	4.00 (1)	2.00 (8)	100 (1)	2.75
3 Newcastle	30.33 (2)	3.67 (2)	2.67 (6)	83 (7)	4.25
Leicester	27.29 (4)	3.00 (4)	3.00 (4)	86 (5)	4.25
5 Saracens	27.00 (5)	2.63 (8)	3.13 (3)	88 (4)	5.00
6 Harlequins	26.71 (6)	2.86 (6)	2.00 (8)	86 (5)	6.25
7 Gloucester	24.50 (7)	2.83 (7)	1.83 (11)	100 (1)	6.50
8 Wasps	21.80 (10)	1.80 (9)	3.20 (2)	80 (9)	7.50
Northampton	23.29 (9)	1.17 (10)	3.86 (1)	57 (11)	7.75
10 Richmond	23.38 (8)	3.00 (4)	1.75 (12)	75 (10)	8.50
11 London Irish	15 00 (11)	1.00 (11)	2.17 (7)	83 (7)	9.00
12 Bristol	13.14 (12)	1.00 (11)	1.88 (10)	57 (11)	11.00

DEFENCE

This table uses the same principles as for the offence table. Only the categories are different — least points, tries and penalty goals against. The fourth category is the percentage of matches in which the opposition has failed to score a try.

	Pts	Tries	Pens	Tries ag	Overall
1 Saracens	15.63 (1)	1.13 (1)	2.38 (7)	38 (2)	2.75
2 Leicester	19.19 (3)	1.71 (4)	2.14 (3)	14 (4)	3.50
3 Newcastle	18 17 (2)	1.17 (2)	3.17 (11)	33 (3)	4.50
4 Richmond	19 86 (4)	1.25 (3)	4.00 (12)	63 (1)	5.00
5 Northampton	20.14 (5)	2.00 (5)	2.43 (8)	14 (5)	5.75
6 Gloucester	24.83 (6)	3.17 (9)	1.67 (1)	0 (8)	6.00
7 Harlequins	26.86 (7)	2.86 (6)	2.29 (6)	0 (8)	6.75
8 Sale	28.71 (9)	3.14 (8)	2.43 (8)	14 (4)	7.25
9 Bath	28.17 (8)	3.33 (10)	2.17 (4)	0 (8)	7.50
Bristol	36.29 (12)	4.86 (12)	2 00 (2)	14 (4)	7 50
11 London Irish	31.67 (11)	3.83 (11)	2.17 (4)	0 (8)	8.50
12 Wasps	30.60 (10)	3.00 (7)	2.80 (10)	0 (8)	8.75

COVERAGE: Today: Television: Sky Sports 2: Bristol v Newcastle (live), from 1 30pm. Radio: BBC Radio 5 Live: Coverage of Premiership games in Sport on Five. Tomorrow: Television: Channel 5: Rugby Express, from 6pm.

SCORING TRENDS

This table shows in which half teams score and concede points and in which quarter they score and concede tries.

	FOR POINTS		FOR TRIES				AGAINST POINTS		AGAINST TRIES			
	FH	SH	1	2	3	4	FH	SH	1	2	3	4
Bath	76	100	1	6	3	10	67	102	2	5	6	7
Bristol	31	61	1	—	4	2	107	145	7	5	9	13
Gloucester	49	98	2	3	5	7	89	69	5	5	4	5
Harlequins	106	81	3	7	3	7	70	118	3	3	5	9
Leicester	81	110	3	4	5	7	77	57	2	3	3	5
London Irish	65	25	2	3	1	—	61	129	3	5	3	12
Newcastle	79	101	4	5	5	8	67	42	1	3	—	3
Northampton	76	87	2	1	2	7	68	73	4	3	4	3
Richmond	63	124	2	5	10	7	84	75	—	5	2	3
Sale	116	116	9	6	6	7	100	101	2	8	5	7
Saracens	110	106	5	6	4	7	57	68	2	—	3	4
Wasps	57	52	1	2	—	6	71	82	4	3	4	4
Total	894	1033	35	48	47	73	894	1033	35	48	47	73

LEADING POINTS-SCORERS

	T	C	PG	DG	Pts
M Lynagh (Saracens)	4	14	25	1	126
S Howarth (Sale)	1	22	15	1	97
J Stransky (Leicester)	1	11	18	1	84
M Mapletoft (Gloucester)	2	12	11	1	70
G Rees (Wasps)	1	7	15	—	64
T Lacroix (Harlequins)	1	9	11	2	62
P Burke (Bristol)	—	6	13	2	57
P Grayson (Northampton)	2	6	10	1	55

TRY-SCORERS

5: J Wright (Richmond), D O'Leary (Harlequins), T Beim (Sale), D Rees (Sale). 4: Lynagh, W Greenwood (Leicester), S Quinnell (Richmond). 3: R Tombs (Gloucester), T Fanolua (Gloucester), M Horak (Leicester), G Armstrong (Newcastle), P Lam (Newcastle), N Popplewell (Newcastle), D Chapman (Richmond), K Ellis (Sale), P Sanderson (Sale), R Constable (Saracens).
Includes Premiership matches only ■ *Compiled by Stephen McCormack*

RUGBY LEAGUE: ST HELENS PROVE NO MATCH FOR THEIR RESURGENT RIVALS

Wigan take aim for winter of content

Wigan Warriors 46
St Helens 2

BY A CORRESPONDENT

FIVE tries within 12 minutes at the start of the second half of a match for the Winter Challenge Trophy at Central Park yesterday seemed to confirm the prediction of Shaun McRae, the St Helens coach, that Wigan are on course to regain their place among the elite.

St Helens will be much stronger when the serious action begins. Their reserves were clearly out of their depth as eight players joined in Wigan's ten-try spree. The opening try, in the tenth minute, was the pick of the bunch, a sparkling 80-yard move that ended with Jon Clarke, the hooker, touching down.

The holiday crowd of 15,500 were treated more to an exhibition than a contest, but John Monie, the new Wigan coach, may have cause for concern over an arm injury to Henry Paul that caused him to miss the second half.

Only the erratic goalkicking of Andrew Farrell kept St Helens in contention as Wigan ran in first-half tries from Clarke, Paul and Craig Murdock. St Helens replied with a Paul Wellens penalty.

Kris Radlinski scored Wigan's fourth try and Jason Robinson went over twice at the start of the second half. Gary Connolly and Danny Ellison took the score to 36-2. Lee Gilmour rounded off the victory with two tries at the end.

SCORERS: Wigan: Tries: Robinson (2), Gilmour (2), Clarke, Paul, Murdock, Radlinski, Connolly, Ellison. Goals: Farrell (2), Hall. St Helens: Goal: Wellens.
WIGAN WARRIORS: K Radlinski; J Robinson, G Connolly, M Bell, D Ellison; H Paul, C Murdock; N Cowie, J Clarke, L Hansen, S Haughton, S Holgate, A Farrell. Substitutes: T Mestrov, G Tallec, M Hall, D Cardiss, L Gilmour, R Smyth.
ST HELENS: J Johnson; T Stewart, A Haigh, A Cross, A Sullivan, S Barrow; P Wellens, A Leatham; P Anderson, J O'Neill, I Pickavance, A Perelini, K Hammond. Substitutes: C Newall, J Hamilton, J Arkwright, G Price, K Newall, D Pimblett
Referee: S Cummings (Widnes)

Journey with England has only just started

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO

There will be little opportunity for seasonal overindulgence by Wasps, or any other of the country's top clubs, during the holiday period. All of us have important games in the Allied Dunbar Premiership but, more than that, it is an opportunity to show the public that we can build on the interest sparked off by the recent internationals.

People may have been spoilt not only for quantity but for quality, because most of the internationals against the southern-hemisphere countries showed what can happen when two teams go out with the same attitude — of wanting to create a fluid game. The skill levels are sometimes lacking, but if the attitude and intention are there it makes for entertainment.

The philosophy demonstrated by New Zealand on their tour had been adopted by England and our last game, the 26-26 draw with the All Blacks at Twickenham, raised the expectations of the rugby public. Rightly so. People will go into the new year wanting to see what the team is made of and expecting success in the five nations' championship; I like to think we can justify their expectations and even push them farther forward.

There are many places I want to go as a rugby player; the team I play for and captain is on a journey and we appreciate that we have only just started. So whatever highlights I have enjoyed during 1997 they are tempered by that knowledge, but I'm also encouraged by how far this England squad has come in a short time. If that level of improvement, during the four weeks we had together, can be sustained then the results will take care of themselves.

We have shown an ability to listen to what has been said by the coaches and act on it. That takes a lot of doing when you are losing games and the pressure is mounting; to have the character to stick to your guns and go with what you believe when it would have been all too easy to go the other way. That has been the most pleasing aspect of my short time as England's captain, which, on a personal level, has been an immense honour and privilege.

But we all take different pleasures from different experiences. Winning the league with Wasps last season, when, as a club, we were underrated from the start was special. You could see the reward for the efforts not just of individuals but by the squad as a whole. It was gratifying because it showed that, with all the money being spent and the glamorous names being introduced, the essential ingredients that Wasps already possessed could, if we were prepared to put in that extra effort, win prizes.

I joined Wasps in 1990, the year that they first won the league, and to be in the forefront seven years later was very pleasing. The challenge now is to sustain that effort, knowing what a motivation it is to opponents who will always lift themselves against the champions. At the moment it is not happening for us, which is why our Christmas programme is of paramount importance — three games in ten days, Premiership meetings with Northampton and Richmond, and our Tetley's Bitter Cup game against Harlequins.

You can understand from that why there will be little chance of Christmas celebrations being overdone. Each club has its own structure for managing the holiday period, and each player will have his own idea about how it should be done, but we all have a duty to be in the best possible shape, mentally and physically, so that the public that pays good money to be entertained at rugby matches gets what it deserves, whether through the turnstiles or watching on television.

For all sorts of reasons it is difficult to select the best moment from 1997 but, if I am brutally honest, I would have to highlight the British Isles tour. I'd be lying if I said that wasn't the best experience of my rugby life so far, because there is a sense of being part of history. Any visitor to our home would see all my books about tours of the past, to and from Britain, the biographies of the game's legends, such as J. P. R. Williams, who shared in two wonderful Lions tours, in 1971 and 1974.

I've read them all from cover to cover, so when you are picked for the Lions you know what you are getting into, but you can't quite appreciate it until you become directly involved, surrounded by the best players in the four home unions. To come together, to know where we were going and to get there was fantastic.

Over the eight weeks there were elements of doubt, there were highs and lows and, at the end of it all, there were still reservations that we had not been able to reproduce our provincial form in the international matches. That is to South Africa's credit and, if we had had as much ambition in attack as we had in defence then we might have done even better.

But, as a pure sporting moment, winning the second international against the Springboks in Durban ranks by itself. It was almost as though I had dropped the winning goal myself, even though the glory for that went to Jerry Guscott. If I could have just one moment of the year over again, it would be that one.

ANIMALS & ACCESSORIES

ANIMALS & ACCESSORIES Continued from Page 12

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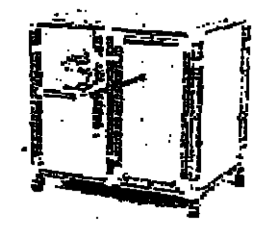

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هكذا من الأصل

RACING: WINNING OWNERS OFFER SHEIKH MOHAMMED ADVICE AFTER KING GEORGE CELEBRATION

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

See More Business, ridden by Thornton, leads the blinkered Challenger Du Luc over the last on his way to victory in the King George VI Chase at Kempton yesterday

See More Business fulfils dream

By Richard Evans
Racing Correspondent

A TIMELY reminder that not everyone shares Sheikh Mohammed's views about the need for more prize-money came in the unlikely surroundings of the Kempton winner's enclosure yesterday after See More Business fulfilled a West Country dream by winning the Pertemps King George VI Chase.

Paul Barber and John Keighley, two National Hunt stalwarts from Somerset, saw their colours carried to deserved success by the Paul Nicholls-trained 10-1 shot and used the platform to tell the Dubai leader some basic facts about the sport they love.

"My advice to Sheikh Mohammed is to go racing and have fun — it is not a business. At the end of the day, if you don't like the prize-money, get out because you don't have to do it," Barber said.

"We are in this country to enjoy our brand of racing for our brand of money that is up for grabs; it's common sense. People who go shooting or play football and golf don't go on about prize-money all the time, do they? I think we are lucky to get prize-money. In point-to-points you only get £150. It is a hobby. You are not in this game for anything else.

"We have got lots of horses. You put your money into the horses and then kiss goodbye to it. That is the only way to do it."

BIG-RACE DETAILS

2.20 PERTEMPS KING GEORGE VI CHASE
(Grade 1. £64,374. 3m)

SEE MORE BUSINESS b g Seymour Hicks - Miss Redlands (J Keighley, P Barber) 7-11-10 A Thornton (10-1) 1.

Challenger Du Luc B b g Chamberlin - Islande II (D Johnson) 7-11-10 A P McCoy (16-1) 2.

Rough Quest b g Crash Course - Our Quest (A Wates) 11-11-10 M A Fitzgerald (11-2) 3.

ALSO RAN: 9-4 jt-fav One Man (5th), 9-4 jt-fav Suny Bay (4th), 8 Barton Bank (6th), 10 Senor El Betrutti, 25 Djeddah. 8 ran. NR: Yorkshire Gale. 2l, 10l, 15l, dist, 18l. P Nicholls at Shepton Mallet. Tote £10.90; £1.90, £2.30, £1.60. DF: £33.60. Trio: £56.00. CSF: £125.40

Barber is one of the biggest dairy farmers in the South West, with 2,500 acres, 1,400 cows and a large cheese business. Along with Keighley, an accountant who runs an engineering business, they have ten jumpers in partnership and a further five apiece running in their own colours. Their ultimate dream is to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup and that could become reality next March with a horse they initially refused to buy in the sales ring.

Barber explained: "John and I liked the horse on paper and sent my brother, Richard, to the Doncaster Sales, who bought him for 5,800 guineas. When we arrived we decided he was too small and said Richard could let someone else have him."

After See More Business won two point-to-points and fell in a third when a distance clear, they quickly revised their opinion — and bought him back for multiples of the original sale price.

As a novice chaser last season, he took on the best and finished second twice to Dorans Pride, but his jumping was rather deliberate. Extensive schooling has seen a gradual improvement in that department but, as the eight runners set off for the King George yesterday, Andrew Thornton, stepping in for the suspended Timmy Murphy, deliberately kept See More Business away from the crowded inside rail to give him time to "pop away" at the fences.

Barton Bank and Suny Bay vied for the lead over the first dozen obstacles but the race began in earnest turning for home. One Man, an uneasy 9-4 joint-favourite, had made a bad blunder five out but cruised into the lead jumping the third last. However, as so often before, his effort was short-lived and See More Business powered into the lead only to be joined by Challenger Du Luc, travelling ominously well on his outside.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: MATCHLESS
(3.30 Chepstow)
Next best: Sparkling Cone
(12.50 Chepstow)

The Martin Pipe-trained horse is not known as a monkey for nothing and, almost inevitably, it was See More Business who showed far more resolution to win by two lengths, with a further ten lengths back to the staying-on Rough Quest.

Nicholls, enjoying his biggest training success, said: "To beat the best today at levels means he has to be a decent horse. If the ground is soft at Cheltenham, I can't wait to see him running up the hill. He goes well fresh and I would not be too worried if he doesn't run between now and then."

While Ladbrokes, the Tote and William Hill cut the winner to 12-1 for the Festival showpiece, Coral were sufficiently impressed to install him as 7-1 second favourite behind Dorans Pride.

Earlier, the in-form Nicky Henderson completed a double with Fiddling The Facts, who beat Forest Ivory in the Pertemps City Network Feltham Novices' Chase, while Serenus landed the Network Personnel Handicap Hurdle a shade cosily.

Racing results, page 34

CHEPSTOW

THUNDERER

12.20 Champleve
12.50 Sparkling Cone
1.20 Rainwatch
1.55 CYBORGO (nap)
2.30 Dr Leunt
3.00 Sadler's Realm
3.30 Kings Measure

GOING: HEAVY SIS

12.20 CALOR GAS NOVICES HURDLE
(£3,487: 2m 4f 110yd) (10 runners)

1	24F-611	CHAMPLEVE 39 (S) (D Johnson) M Pipe 4-11-12	A P McCoy	[illegible]
2	0	ARGUABLY 65 (Mrs C Murray) G Balding 5-11-0	Mr E Babington (7)	–
3	3-0	BRUSH WITH FAME 21 (J & B Gibbs & Sons Ltd) P Hobbs 5-11-0	G Tormey	–
4	1-33	CRABAPPLE HILL 41 (BF,S) (Mrs E Barnes) D Nicholson 5-11-0	R Thornton	105
5	123-	EVER BLESSED 409 (S) (Ever Blessed Pnrs) Mrs J Pitman 5-11-0	R Dunwoody	109
6	F0-4440	KNOCKAROO 61F (G) (D Wintle) D Wintle 6-11-0	R Bellamy	70
7	0-6	RIVER MULLIGAN 31 (St Mellion Estates Ltd) P Hobbs 5-11-0	D Bridgwater	75
8	3120-5	THE LAND AGENT 31 (S) (D Barr) J Mullins 6-11-0	P Niven	99
9	00-	TIME TO PARLEZ 309 (Mrs J Strange) C Drewe 6-11-0	P Holley	–
10	633	BALLY LIRA 31 (P Rodford) P Rodford 5-10-9	S Burrough	–

BETTING: 4-5 Champleve, 4-1 Ever Blessed, 6-1 Crabapple Hill, 10-1 The Land Agent, 12-1 Knockaroo, 16-1 River Mulligan, 25-1 Brush With Fame, 33-1 others

1996: MEETING ABANDONED — FROST

FORM FOCUS Champleve beat Desert Power beaten a distance in 10-runner novice hurdle at Newton Abbot (2m 1f, soft), previously beat Le Bambois 2l in 20-runner 4yo handicap hurdle at Auteuil (2m 3f 110yd, good to soft). Arguably 47l 8th of 14 to Polo Ridge in novice hurdle at Wincanton (2m 6f, good). Brush With Fame 21l 10th of 14 to Muskhill in national hunt flat race at Towcester (2m, soft), previously 12l 3rd of 20 to Melody Maid in national hunt flat race at Worcester (2m, good to firm). Crabapple Hill 9½l 3rd of 9 to Christchurch in maiden hurdle at Towcester (2m 5f, good), previously 21l 3rd of 17 to Muskhill in national hunt flat race at Bangor (2m 1f, good). Ever Blessed 3¾l 3rd of 17 to Aerion in novice hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, good): previously 11l 2nd of 12 to The Land Agent (1lb worse off) in national hunt flat race at Newton Abbot (2m 1f, soft). Knockaroo 52l last of 13 to Fane Path in handicap hurdle at Tipperary (3m 4f, good to firm), previously 23l 4th of 11 to Aboriginal in hurdle at Cork (2m 4f, good). River Mulligan 62l 6th of 16 to Strong Tel in novice hurdle at Chepstow (2m 4f 110yd, soft), previously 21l 12th of 20 to Kings Measure in national hunt flat race at Ayr (2m, good). The Land Agent 16l 5th of 16 to Lord Of The River in novice hurdle at Windsor (2m 4f, good), previously 28l 8th of 17 to Red Blazer in novice hurdle at Leicester (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft). Time To Parlez 49l 8th of 12 to Royalmo in novice hurdle at Kempton (2m 5f, good to soft), previously 47l 7th of 18 to Juyush in novice hurdle at Towcester (2m, good to soft). Bally Lira 11l 3rd of 8 to Kendish Bard in national hunt flat race at Chepstow (2m 110yd, soft) previously 9½l 3rd of 14 to Potter Again in national hunt flat race at Exeter (2m 1f 110yd, good to soft)

CHAMPLEVE looked a class act at Newton Abbot and is a confident choice

12.50 LEVY BOARD HANDICAP CHASE
BBC2
(£4,923: 2m 3f 110yd) (9 runners)

1	351417-	DENVER BAY 256 (F,S) (B Naylor) J Gifford 10-12-0	L Aspell (3)	116
2	41P1-25	ORSWELL LAD 21 (S) (R Wright) P Hobbs 8-11-7	Mr R Widger (7)	122
3	1023-1U	WITH IMPUNITY 15 (BF,CD,G,S) (G Mizel) P Nicholls 8-11-4	R Dunwoody	127
4	F-11222	COOLTEEN HERO 23 (D,F,G,S) (J & J Cook) R Alner 7-10-13	P Holley	126
5	1014-4	INDIAN ARROW 12 (BF,F,S) (J & J Richards) M Pipe 9-10-12	C Maude	124
6	122P-31	WELL TIMED 12 (S) (Mrs G Roberts) R Frost 7-10-7 (5ex)	J Frost	126
7	/03-U31	EARLY DRINKER 28 (G,S) (S C-Williams) O Sherwood 9-10-4	J A McCarthy	127
8	53SP-1	SPARKLING CONE 9 (S) (Mrs M Horton) Miss V Williams 8-10-4 (5ex)	A P McCoy	143
9	34P0P3-	BENJAMIN LANCASTER 294 (C,G,S) (M Griffin) M Griffin 13-10-0	R Thornton	120

Long handicap: Benjamin Lancaster 9-10

BETTING: 5-2 Sparkling Cone, 7-2 With Impunity, 6-1 Indian Arrow, Well Timed, 7-1 Early Drinker, 8-1 Coolteen Hero, 10-1 Orswell Lad, 14-1 others

FORM FOCUS Denver Bay pulled up in handicap chase at Cheltenham (3m 2f 110yd, good to firm). Orswell Lad 12l 5th of 7 to Dom Samourai in handicap chase at Chepstow (3m 2f 110yd, soft). With Impunity on penultimate start beat Flapjack Lad a distance in 7-runner amateur handicap chase at Aintree (2m 6f, good to soft). Coolteen Hero neck 2nd of 3 to Nashville Star in handicap chase at Windsor (2m, good), previously 9l 2nd of 3 to Sublime Fellow in handicap chase at Warwick (2m, good to soft). Well Timed beat Thursday Night neck in 9-runner handicap chase at Newton Abbot (2m 110yd, heavy) with Indian Arrow (5lb better off) 18l 4th. Early Drinker beat Ballyline neck in 5-runner handicap chase at Haydock (2m 4f, soft), previously 11l 3rd of 10 to Scoresheet in handicap chase at Wincanton (2m 5f, good). Sparkling Cone beat Strong Vision 12l in 14-runner novice chase at Towcester (2m 6f, soft), previously handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft)

WELL TIMED quickened well at Newton Abbot and this is no tougher

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
D Nicholson	18	66	27.3	P Niven	3	6	50.0
P Hobbs	23	87	26.4	A P McCoy	29	108	26.9
M Pipe	51	209	24.4	R Dunwoody	30	132	22.7
P Nicholls	18	80	22.5	D Bridgwater	19	84	22.6
Mrs J Pitman	7	39	17.9	G Tormey	5	25	20.0

1.20 FINALE JUNIOR HURDLE
BBC2
(Grade I: 3-Y-O: £15,394: 2m 110yd) (7 runners)

1	34	BORAZON 15 (M Archer & Miss J Broadhurst) N Twiston-Davies 11-0	C Maude	108
2	321	KILBRIDE LAD 7 (D,S) (P Wetzel) D Nicholson 11-0	R Thornton	129
3	1	RAINWATCH 29 (D,S) (Mrs A Farrant) M Pipe 11-0	A P McCoy	138
4	11	SAD MAD BAD 28 (D,G) (P Savill) Mrs M Reveley 11-0	P Niven	137
5	0	SHADED 61F (E Wey) P Rodford 11-0	S Burrough	–
6	411	VIRTUOSO 12 (D,G) (Mrs M Devine) C Mann 11-0	R Dunwoody	122
7	0	FOLEYS QUEST 12 (E Houghton) J S Moore 10-9	W McFarland	–

BETTING: 8-11 Rainwatch, 4-1 Kilbride Lad, 11-2 Sad Mad Bad, Virtuoso, 20-1 Borazon, 66-1 Shaded, 100-1 Foleys Quest

FORM FOCUS Borazon 27l 4th of 13 to Sound Appeal in 3yo novice hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 1f, good). Kilbride Lad beat Warrlin 5l in 14-runner 3yo novice hurdle at Haydock (2m, good to soft), previously 6l 2nd of 14 to Rainwatch (levels) in 3yo novice hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, soft) with Borazon (levels) 20l 3rd. Rainwatch beat Kilbride Lad (levels) 6l in 14-runner 3yo novice hurdle at Newbury (2m 110yd, soft) with Borazon (levels) 20l 3rd. Sad Mad Bad beat City Hall short head in 15-runner 3yo novice hurdle at Newcastle (2m, good), previously beat Kingdom Emperor 10l in 15-runner 3yo novice hurdle at Market Rasen (2m 1f 110yd, good). Shaded 42l 8th of 9 to Sound Appeal in 3yo novice hurdle at Kempton (2m, good). Virtuoso beat Keen Dancer 5l in 20-runner 3yo novice hurdle at Warwick (2m, good) with Foleys Quest (7lb worse off) 25l 7th.

KILBRIDE LAD has six lengths to make up on Rainwatch but is improving

1.55 CORAL WELSH NATIONAL HANDICAP CHASE
BBC2
(Grade I: £30,846: 3m 5f 110yd) (15 runners)

1	/1P21-F	BELMONT KING 28 (C,G,S) (Mrs B Bond) P Nicholls 9-12-0	R Dunwoody	149
2	/11101-	CYBORGO 287 (C,G,S) (County Stores) M Pipe 7-11-13	A P McCoy	155
3	1/P6-13	BANJO 21 (BF,F,G,S) (D Mercer) D Nicholson 7-11-11	R Thornton	154
4	31301-3	BELLS LIFE 14 (C,G,S) (R Gibbs) P Hobbs 8-11-2	G Tormey	150
5	/25P/55	EARTH SUMMIT 21 (B,C,G,S) (Summit Ptnrs) N Twiston-Davies 9-10-13	T Jenks	136
6	1/120-2	INDIAN TRACKER 21 (S) (J & J Richards) M Pipe 7-10-12	C Maude	[illegible]
7	R/113/P	GREENHIL TARE AWAY 21 (C,F,G,S) (Mrs P Papper) P Hobbs 9-10-7	S McNeill	–
8	12-3511	SAMLEE 22 (C,D,F,G,S) (White Lion Ptnrs) P Hobbs 8-10-5 (4ex)	D Bridgwater	144
9	1420-51	EVANGELICA 52 (F,S) (M Pipe Racing Club) M Pipe 7-10-3	G Supple (5)	154
10	111P-24	GIVENTIME 21 (BF,C,S) (L Kimber) A Turnell 9-10-2	L Harvey	149
11	4400-U5	KILLESHIN 7 (G,S) (H Manners) H Manners 11-10-1	S Curran	158
12	11131-3	CARIBOO GOLD 14 (B,F,G,S) (Mrs S Nelson) K Bailey 8-10-1	P Carberry	134
13	24006-P	DAKYNS BOY 35 (S) (A Parker) N Twiston-Davies 12-10-0	D Leahy	122
14	505-121	DOM SAMOURAI 21 (B,C,S) (B Kilpatrick) M Pipe 6-10-0 (4ex)	J A McCarthy	155
15	166-P53	FOODBROKER STAR 21 (S) (Food Brokers Ltd) J Gifford 7-10-0	O Burrows (5)	153

Long handicap: Dakyns Boy 9-9, Dom Samourai 9-5, Foodbroker Star 9-1.

BETTING: 7-2 Cyborgo, 6-1 Bells Life, 7-1 Indian Tracker, Samlee, 8-1 Belmont King, Banjo, Cariboo Gold, 12-1 others

FORM FOCUS Belmont King fell in handicap chase grade 3 at Newbury (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft), previously beat Samlee (1lb worse off) 1¾l in 17-runner handicap chase grade 3 at Ayr (4m 1f, good) with Dakyns Boy (4lb better off) 8¾l 6th and Killeshin (12lb better off) beaten a distance 10th. Cyborgo beat The Last Fling 3½l in 7-runner novice chase grade 2 at Aintree (3m 1f, good), previously 58l 8th of 14 to Mr Mulligan in chase grade 1 at Cheltenham (3m 2f 110yd, good) with Banjo (2lb better off) pulled up. Bells Life 11l 3rd of 9 to Senor El Betrutti in handicap chase at Cheltenham (2m 5f, good): previously beat Yeoman Warrior 3l in 20-runner handicap chase at Aintree (2m 6f, good). Indian Tracker 4l 2nd of 6 to See More Business in handicap chase grade 2 at Chepstow (3m, soft) with Banjo (levels) 12l 3rd, Earth Summit (levels) 23l 5th and Greenhil Tare Away (levels) pulled up. Samlee beat What A Hand 1l in 4-runner handicap chase at Sandown (3m 5f 110yd, good): previously beat Court Melody 2l in 11-runner handicap chase at Aintree (3m 3f, good to soft) with Dakyns Boy (5lb better off) pulled up. Evangelica beat Flow 3½l in 3-runner handicap chase at Newton Abbot (3m 2f 110yd, good to firm), previously 37l 5th of 6 to Father Sky in handicap chase at Chepstow (3m, good to firm). Killeshin 34l 5th of 8 to Turn Of Phrase in handicap chase at Haydock (4m 110yd, good to soft). Dom Samourai beat River Mandate 1½l in 7-runner handicap chase at Chepstow (3m 2f 110yd, soft) with Giventime (9lb better off) 12l 4th and Killeshin (9lb better off) unseated rider. Foodbroker Star 2¾l 3rd of 6 to Thermal Warrior in chase at Sandown (3m 110yd, good); previously 11l 5th of 8 to Equity Player in handicap chase at Taunton (3m, good).

KILLESHIN has dropped to a fair mark and has his preferred soft ground

2.30 JULIAN WILSON FAREWELL NOVICES CHASE
BBC2
(£3,579: 2m 3f 110yd) (5 runners)

1	5650-12	DR LEUNT 52 (BF,G,S) (P Emery) P Hobbs 6-11-8	R Dunwoody	128
2	56-1F42	THURSDAY NIGHT 12 (F,S) (B Brinman) P Nicholls 6-11-8	Mr J Tizzard (5)	125
3	23/5625	LANDED GENTRY 21 (V,BF,S) (K Bell) J O'Shea 8-11-2	Michael Brennan (3)	116
4	6011-F5	STRONG PALADIN 28 (D,F,S) (Mrs A Brodie) J Gifford 6-11-2	L Aspell (3)	112
5	PP4-PU6	KNOWING 11 (S) (P Watkins) P Watkins 10-10-11	Dr P Pritchard	90

BETTING: 4-5 Dr Leunt, 3-1 Thursday Night, 6-1 Landed Gentry, Strong Paladin, 50-1 Knowing

FORM FOCUS Dr Leunt 30l 2nd of 3 to Galatason Jane in novice chase at Newton Abbot (3m 2f 110yd, good to firm); previously beat Millcroft Regatta 8l in 7-runner novice chase at Exeter (2m 6f 110yd, good). Thursday Night neck 2nd of 9 to Well Timed in handicap chase at Newton Abbot (2m 110yd, heavy); previously 14l 4th of 14 to Jefferies in novice chase at Taunton (2m 3f, good). Landed Gentry beaten a distance 5th of 6 to Stormy Passage in novice chase at Chepstow (2m 3f 110yd, soft); previously 1¾l 2nd of 7 to Sounds Fyne in chase at Newbury (2m 4f, good to soft) with Strong Paladin (levels) beaten a distance 5th. Knowing 35l 6th of 8 to Astral Invasion in novice handicap chase at Hereford (2m, good), previously novice chase at Hereford (2m 3f, good).

LANDED GENTRY ran badly last time but could bounce back to form

3.00 SOUTH-WEST RACING CLUB CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE
(£2,320: 2m 110yd) (7 runners)

1	1211-25	BOLD STATEMENT 32 (D,F,S) (Countess Cadogan) T Forster 5-12-0	R Thornton	115
2	5/61-22	WORLD EXPRESS 31 (B,D,F,S) (Dragtek Plus) B Millman 7-11-12	D Salter (3)	122
3	22-0121	SADLER'S REALM 22 (D,S) (B O Racing) P Hobbs 4-11-2	E Callaghan	128
4	142/25-	BEYOND OUR REACH 385 (D,F,G,S) (P Bradshaw) R Hodges 9-10-13	J Harris (7)	112
5	/P005-6	MANOLETE 12 (D,G,S) (C Rear) Mrs M Jones 6-10-10	M Dunne (3)	109
6	0616	FABULON 89 (BF,F) (D Johnson) M Pipe 4-10-7	G Supple (3)	99
7	0/3044-	RARE OCCURANCE 270 (R Harris) J O'Shea 7-10-0	Michael Brennan (3)	88

BETTING: 15-8 Sadler's Realm, 3-1 Bold Statement, 7-2 World Express, 4-1 Fabulon, 16-1 Beyond Our Reach, 20-1 Rare Occurance, 33-1 Manolete.

FORM FOCUS Bold Statement 10l 5th of 10 to Tibetan in handicap hurdle at Huntingdon (2m 110yd, good); previously ½l 2nd of 7 to Miss Roberto in handicap hurdle at Worcester (2m, good). World Express 3l 2nd of 14 to Ivor's Flutter in handicap hurdle at Windsor (2m 6f 110yd, good): previously 2½l 2nd of 7 to Potter's Gale in handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good to soft). Sadler's Realm beat Walter's Destiny 8l in 7-runner handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 3f, soft); previously 2½l 2nd of 8 to Noble Tom in handicap hurdle at Windsor (2m, good). Beyond Our Reach 9½l 5th of 10 to Dominion's Dream in handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 2f, good to soft): previously neck 2nd of 8 to Road To Au Bon in handicap hurdle at Taunton (2m 3f 110yd, good to firm). Manolete 45l last of 6 to Truancy in handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m, good); previously beaten a distance 5th of 16 to Cardinal Rule in novice handicap chase at Hereford (2m 3f, good to soft). Fabulon beaten a distance last of 6 to Steer Point in amateur novice hurdle at Exeter (2m 1f 110yd, good to firm), previously beat Zeliba 1l in 5-runner novice hurdle at Plumpton (2m 4f, good to firm). Rare Occurance 23l 4th of 6 to Quite A Man in novice chase at Uttoxeter (2m 5f, good to firm); previously 49l 4th of 10 to Nigel's Lad in novice hurdle at Doncaster (2m 4f, good)

WORLD EXPRESS has recently finished second to two very well-handicapped horses

3.30 CHEPSTOW CHAMPIONSHIP STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE
(£6,610: 2m 110yd) (16 runners)

1	111	MUSKHILL 21 (D,G,S) (Malcourts) D Nicholson 6-11-10	R Massey (3)	–
2	1-1	BILLY BOX 19 (D,G) (A Tuckerman) G McCourt 5-11-7	D Bridgwater	–
3	11	IRISH BANKER 31 (CD,F,S) (D Jenks) M Pipe 6-11-7	A P McCoy	–
4	1-1	KINGS MEASURE 47 (D,G) (J Wilson) J Jefferson 4-11-7	E Callaghan	–
5	21-1	SUNDAY VENTURE 33 (D,G) (F Sainsbury) N Henderson 5-11-7	R Thornton	–
6	23/1-12	KNOCK LEADER 39 (BF,D,G,S) (A Solomou) M Pipe 5-11-4	G Supple (5)	–
7	1-6	LEWESDON MANOR 21 (D,S) (J Phillips) P R Webber 6-11-4	J A McCarthy	–
8	1	MATCHLESS 182 (D,G) (J Rose) Lord Huntingdon 4-11-4	P Carberry	–
9	1	MERRY SHOT 11 (G) (R & Exors Late E Hitchens) Mrs J Pitman 5-11-4	D Leahy	–
10	12	MITE EQUAL 49 (F) (H Kinsolen) M Pipe 4-11-4	C Maude	–
11	1	SMITH'S PERK 18 (D,G) (A Smith) Mrs J Pitman 4-11-4	G Hogan (3)	–
12	121	LATIN MISTRESS 38 (D,F,G) (R Dunn) P Nicholls 5-11-2	L Cummins (5)	–
13	4	BROWN MELODY 22 (T Johnsey) Miss C Johnsey 4-11-0	T Jenks	–
14	42	JET TABS 31 (Jet Stationery Company Ltd) Mrs J Pitman 5-11-0	R Dunwoody	–
15	1	WESTFIELD MIST 117 (D,F) (Mrs E Harding) P Eccles 5-10-13	O Byrne	–
16	064	DUNRAVEN LADY 10 (D Brace) D Brace 5-10-9	Miss P Jones	–

BETTING: 4-1 Muskhill, 9-2 Kings Measure, 11-2 Knock Leader, 6-1 Jet Tabs, 13-2 Irish Banker, 10-1 Billy Box, Sunday Venture, 12-1 others.

FORM FOCUS Muskhill beat Crazy Crusader 3½l in 14-runner national hunt flat race at Towcester (2m, soft) with Lewesdon Manor (3lb better off) 8l 6th. Billy Box beat Jabiru 1l in 18-runner national hunt flat race at Ludlow (2m, good); previously beat Fortunes Flight 5l in 20-runner national hunt flat race at Sandown (2m 110yd, good). Irish Banker beat Jet Tabs (levels) ½l in 9-runner national hunt flat race at Chepstow (2m 110yd, soft). Kings Measure beat C'Mon Tiger 1¼l in 10-runner national hunt flat race at Carlisle (2m 1f, good); previously beat Siren Song 1½l in 20-runner national hunt flat race at Ayr (2m, good). Sunday Venture beat Miner's Bill neck in 15-runner national hunt flat race at Ludlow (2m, good), previously beat Shebang ¾l in 16-runner national hunt flat race at Folkestone (2m 1f 110yd, good). Matchless beat Stormhill Stag 7l in 18-runner national hunt flat race at Worcester (2m, good). Merry Shot beat Billy Moonshine 5l in 11-runner national hunt flat race at Folkestone (2m 1f 110yd, good). Mite Equal 7l 2nd of 10 to Castle Owen in national hunt flat race at Wincanton (2m, good), previously beat Latin Mistress (5lb better off) 6l in 9-runner national hunt flat race at Taunton (2m 1f, good to firm). Smith's Perk beat Conchobor ¾l in 16-runner national hunt flat race at Huntingdon (2m 110yd, good). Latin Mistress beat Lande's Counsel 8l in 16-runner mares national hunt flat at Hereford (2m 1f, good). Brown Melody 28l 4th of 16 to Kadou Nonantais in national hunt flat race at Hereford (2m 1f, good). Westfield Mist beat Estate Agent 1l in 9-runner national hunt flat race at Hexham (2m, good to firm). Dunraven Lady 31l 4th of 15 to Bassey in national hunt flat race at Bangor (2m 1f, good to soft), previously 9½l 6th of 14 to Irish Banker (7lb worse off) in national hunt flat race at Cheltenham (2m 110yd, good to firm).

MUSKHILL is the pick on form and can shrug off his penalties

Strath Royal sparkles

STRATH ROYAL gained his eighteenth victory in the £20,000-added Rowland Meyrick Handicap Chase at Wetherby yesterday. The Owen Brennan-trained gelding produced a bold display of jumping to put better-fancied rivals in their place in the three miles one furlong test.

Strath Royal, ridden by the trainer's son, Martin, stretched clear in great style in the straight to defeat Major Bell by 13 lengths. Sparky Gayle was a distance away in third, while Colonel In Chief, the favourite, was pulled up. "It's a great day," the trainer said. "We've only seven horses and all bar one belong to Strath Royal's owner Lady Anne Bentinck."

Brennan junior's success was tarnished by the stewards' decision to ban him for two days (January 4-5) for misuse of the whip

KEMPTON PARK

THUNDERER

12.40 Real Estate
1.10 Super Tactics
1.45 Angelo's Double
2.20 Kerawi
2.55 Ciel De Brion
3.25 Three Farthings

Timekeeper's top rating: 1.45 **ANGELO'S DOUBLE.**

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robinson) B Hall 12-0 ... B West (7) 88

Racecard number. Six-figure form (F — fell. P — pulled up. U — unseated rider. B — brought down. S — slipped up. R — refused. D — disqualified). Horse's name. Days since last outing: F if flat. (B — blinkers. V — visor. H — hood. E — Eyeshield. C — course winner. D — distance winner. CD — course and distance winner. BF — beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard. G — good. S — soft, good to soft, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. The Times Timekeeper's speed rating

GOING: SOFT (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

12.40 PERTEMPS CALEDONIAN JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE
(3-Y-O: £5,289: 2m) (15 runners)

101	-1F1133	RUNNING DE CERISY 22 (BF,D,F,S) (P Deal) M Pipe 11-12	[illegible]	119
102	3560114	FATALISTE 44 (BF,D,F,S) (T Parting) M Pipe 11-8	N Williamson	116
103	411	VIRTUOSO 12 (D,G) (Mrs M Devine) C Mann 11-8	2nd Preference	114
104	412	REAL ESTATE 15 (D,S) (Mrs J Mould) D Nicholson 11-4	A Maguire	139
105		ANOTHER NIGHT 97F (M Dennis & C Shields) P Murphy 11-0	P Hide	–
106		ASSAILABLE 68F (N Callaghan) N Callaghan 11-0	DOUBTFUL	–
107		DARCY 114F (Rokdale Ltd) N Callaghan 11-0	Sophie Mitchell	–
108	2	MAJESTY 22 (Sporting Divots) S Dow 11-0	M A Fitzgerald	110
109		MARDREW 88F (T Connors) John Berry 11-0	B Powell	–
110		PUDDLEBROOK (D & L Gardner) N Babbage 11-0	R Greene	–
111	3	SHARBADARID 16 (Mrs A Devine) S Dow 11-0	M Richards	99
112		TORN SILK 84F (Lady Bamford) P R Webber 11-0	A Thornton	–
113	P	UPGRADE 36 (M Archer & Miss J Broadhurst) N Twiston-Davies 11-0	C Llewellyn	–
114		WING OF A PRAYER 182F (Thurloe Thoroughbreds) P Mitchell 11-0	J Culloty	–
115	4	KALINKA 16 (Elite Racing Club) C Egerton 10-9	B Fenton	97

BETTING: 6-4 Real Estate, 4-1 Fataliste, 5-1 Majesty, 8-1 Running De Cerisy, 10-1 Torn Silk, 14-1 Darcy, Sharbadarid, 20-1 others.

1996: MEETING ABANDONED — FROST

FORM FOCUS Fataliste 16l 4th of 15 to Sad Mad Bad in novice hurdle at Market Rasen (2m 1f 110yd, good): previously beat Dunston Bill 11l in novice hurdle at Stratford (2m 110yd, good to firm). Virtuoso beat Keen Dancer 5l in 20-runner novice hurdle at Warwick (2m, good): previously beat Kingdom Emperor 4l in 16-runner novice hurdle at Uttoxeter (2m, good). Real Estate 11l 2nd of 13 to Sound Appeal in novice hurdle at Cheltenham (2m 1f, good), previously beat Leviticus 6l in novice hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, soft). Majesty 5l 2nd of 12 to Tough Act in novice hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good to soft) with Running De Cerisy (5lb worse off) 15l 3rd. Sharbadarid 22l 3rd to Misty Cay in novice hurdle at Fakenham (2m, good) with Kalinka (levels) 25l 4th

REAL ESTATE will appreciate the testing conditions and can return to winning ways

1.10 PERTEMPS EXECUTIVE NETWORK HANDICAP CHASE
C4
(£10,241: 2m 4f 110yd) (5 runners)

201	1/12-33	COULTON 14 (D,F,G,S) (M St Quinton) O Sherwood 10-12-0	N Williamson	158
202	42-3113	SUPER TACTICS 7 (CD,F,G,S) (H Perry) R Alner 9-10-12	A Thornton	170
203	443/42/	SOUTHOLT 784 (F,G,S) (G Hubbard) G Hubbard 9-10-4	B Fenton	–
204	503-P00	KADI 14 (D,G,S) (J Brown) D Nicholson 8-10-0	A Maguire	166
205	520P-41	EDREDON BLEU 23 (D,G) (J Lewis) Miss H Knight 5-10-0	J Culloty	162

Long handicap: Kadi 9-11, Edredon Bleu 9-8

BETTING: 9-4 Super Tactics, 5-2 Edredon Bleu, 3-1 Coulton, 6-1 Kadi, 7-1 Southolt

FORM FOCUS Coulton beaten a distance 3rd of 4 to The Grey Monk in chase at Haydock (3m, good to soft): previously 9l 3rd of 5 to Cool Dawn in handicap chase at Ascot (3m 110yd, good to soft). Super Tactics 7½l 3rd of 7 to Celibate in handicap chase at Ascot (2m, good to soft): previously beat Giventime 11l in 5-runner handicap chase at Kempton (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft). Southolt 13l 2nd of 3 to Dextra Dove in handicap chase at Sandown (2m 4f 110yd, good to firm): previously 24l 4th of 6 to Buckboard Bounce in handicap chase at Newbury (2m 4f, good to firm). Kadi beaten a distance last of 9 to Senor El Betrutti in handicap chase at Cheltenham (2m 5f, good). Edredon Bleu beat Cheryl's Lad ½l in 8-runner handicap chase at Leicester (2m 4f 110yd, good): previously 16l 4th of 7 to Prate Box in handicap chase at Chepstow (2m 3f 110yd, good to soft).

SUPER TACTICS goes well here and can record another success

1.45 PERTEMPS CREAM WAYWARD LAD NOVICES CHASE
C4
(£10,211: 2m 4f 110yd) (6 runners)

301	1121253	AMLAH 22 (F,G) (Salvo Giannini) P Hobbs 5-11-7	M A Fitzgerald	138
302	/13-314	DONTLEAVETHENEST 35 (G,S) (M Shone) R Curtis 7-11-7	N Williamson	128
303	P111-01	SIR DANTE 11 (D,F,G) (P Wilby) R Rowe 6-11-7	A Thornton	122
304	3/2F2-6	ANGELO'S DOUBLE 28 (G,S) (J Heywood) R Buckler 9-11-3	B Powell	150
305	/112F-6	HURRICANE LAMP 21 (G,S) (Mr & Mrs F Welch) D Nicholson 6-11-3	A Maguire	144
306	4-2	BAY LOUGH 18 (G Lock) R Rowe 6-10-12	B Fenton	106

BETTING: 2-1 Hurricane Lamp, 5-2 Sir Dante, 4-1 Amlah, 7-1 Dontleavethenest, Angelo's Double, 8-1 Bay Lough

1996: GREENBACK 5-11-7 N Williamson (11-2) P Hobbs 4 ran

FORM FOCUS Amlah 2l 3rd of 5 to Wise King in novice chase at Sandown (2m 4f 110yd, good); previously 18l 5th of 7 to Call Equiname in handicap chase at Cheltenham (2m, good). Dontleavethenest 15l 4th of 5 to Chief's Song in novice chase at Ascot (2m, good to soft); previously beat Step On Eyre 1l in novice chase at Exeter (2m 3f, good to soft). Sir Dante beat Who Am I beaten a distance in novice chase at Folkestone (2m 5f, good). Angelo's Double beaten a distance 6th of 8 to Go-Informal in grade 2 hurdle at Newbury (3m 110yd, soft): previously 23l 2nd of 3 to Lively Knight in novice chase at Plumpton (2m 5f, good to soft). Hurricane Lamp 9l 6th of 7 to Direct Route in grade 2 novice chase at Sandown (2m, good). Bay Lough 1½l 2nd of 7 to Music Please in maiden chase at Plumpton (2m, soft).

HURRICANE LAMP, highly tried at Sandown, will appreciate this longer trip

2.20 PERTEMPS CHRISTMAS HURDLE
C4
(£24,945: 2m) (5 runners)

401	212F-U0	CHAI-YO 21 (D,G,S) (N Viney) J Old 7-11-7	M A Fitzgerald	144
402	1140-23	I'M SUPPOSIN 7 (BF,D,S) (N Cooper) R Rowe 5-11-7	A Thornton	174
403	200-236	KERAWI 21 (D,G,S) (M Archer) N Twiston-Davies 4-11-7	C Llewellyn	165
404	161-111	SANMARTINO 28 (CD,F,G,S) (K Abdulla) D Nicholson 5-11-7	A Maguire	176
405	1111-	SHADOW LEADER 252 (D,F,G,S) (J Blackshaw) C Egerton 6-11-7	N Williamson	165

BETTING: 5-4 Sanmartino, 11-8 Shadow Leader, 9-2 I'm Supposin, 20-1 Chai-Yo, 50-1 Kerawi.

FORM FOCUS I'm Supposin 7l 3rd of 5 to Mr Markham in hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, good to soft). Kerawi 12l 6th of 21 to Major Jamie in handicap hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good) with Chai-Yo (6lb worse off) 18l 8th. Sanmartino beat I'm Supposin (6lb worse off) 13l in 5-runner hurdle grade 2 at Newbury (2m 110yd, soft). Shadow Leader beat Zabadi 3l in 11-runner hurdle grade 2 at Ayr (2m, good) with I'm Supposin (16lb better off) 14l 7th, previously beat Princeful 10l in 16-runner novice hurdle grade 1 at Cheltenham (2m 110yd, good to firm).

SANMARTINO handled soft ground well enough at Newbury and can win again

2.55 IT RECRUITMENT NETWORK HANDICAP CHASE
C4
(£7,009: 3m) (8 runners)

501	01-6024	CIEL DE BRION 28 (B,G,S) (H de Pracomtal) F Doumen (Fr) 7-11-10	Mr T Doumen (3)	150
502	64/43-1	OATIS REGRETS 22 (G,S) (D Gyle-Thompson) Miss H Knight 9-11-3	A Maguire	137
503	11/1-5F	REDEEMYOURSELF 22 (BF,G,S) (Mrs T Brown) J Gifford 8-10-13	B Powell	129
504	2U1-1U4	FRAZER ISLAND 21 (BF,D,F,G,S) (Dr B Alexander) R Rowe 8-10-11	A Thornton	133
505	3/113-F	ARFER MOLE 22 (S) (W Sturt) J Old 9-10-11	M A Fitzgerald	139
506	/16-U22	ANDRE LAVAL 17 (BF,D,F,G,S) (Mrs C Wright) K Bailey 8-10-8	N Williamson	140
507	41P1-25	ORSWELL LAD 21 (S) (R Wright) P Hobbs 8-10-8	2nd Preference	135
508	/122F-1	SCORESHEET 49 (F,G) (Pell Mell Partners) J Gifford 7-10-0	P Hide	127

Long handicap: Scoresheet 9-12

BETTING: 11-4 Oatis Regrets, 7-2 Ciel De Brion, 9-2 Scoresheet, 5-1 Arfer Mole, 7-1 Redeemyourself, 8-1 Frazer Island, Andre Laval.

FORM FOCUS Ciel De Brion 23l 4th of 14 to Suny Bay in grade 3 handicap chase at Newbury (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft); previously 2l 2nd of 13 to Merimont in chase at Auteuil (2m 7f 110yd, good to soft). Oatis Regrets beat Linton Rocks 2½l in 8-runner handicap chase at Sandown (2m 4f 110yd, good) with Redeemyourself (3lb better off) fell and Arfer Mole (3lb better off) fell. Frazer Island 17l 4th of 6 to Thermal Warrior in chase at Sandown (3m 110yd, good). Andre Laval ½l 2nd of 6 to Who Is Equiname in handicap chase at Leicester (3m, good); previously ½l 2nd of 7 to Sunley Bay in handicap chase at Wincanton (3m 1f 110yd, good to soft). Orswell Lad 12l 5th of 7 to Dom Samourai in handicap chase at Chepstow (3m 2f 110yd, soft); previously 21l 2nd of 6 to Kamikaze in handicap chase at Worcester (2m 7f 110yd, good). Scoresheet beat Koo's Promise 7l in 10-runner handicap chase at Wincanton (2m 5f, good).

ANDRE LAVAL has run well on his last two starts and is open to further improvement

3.25 PERTEMPS EDUCATION NETWORK HANDICAP HURDLE
(£5,701: 2m 5f) (7 runners)

601	15341-3	SUMMER SPELL 84 (C,F,G) (W, M & E Bobins) N Henderson 4-11-10	M A Fitzgerald	148
602	43-1451	FIRE BALL 14 (S) (Queen Elizabeth) F Doumen (Fr) 4-11-6	Mr T Doumen (3)	135
603	312-626	KHALIDI 23 (F,G,S) (T Whitley) D Gandolfo 8-10-6	Sophie Mitchell (5)	143
604	5-12244	SECRET SERVICE 21 (G,S) (Hole In The Wall Gang) C Barwell 5-10-5	B Fenton	147
605	03-1136	PEALINGS 28 (S) (G Hubbard) G Hubbard 5-10-3	A Maguire	158
606	331-F4P	ROYAL PIPER 21 (F,S) (A Darlington) A J Wilson 10-10-3	R Greene	138
607	0/221-5	THREE FARTHINGS 32 (BF,S) (K Brittain) J Old 7-10-3	C Llewellyn	148

BETTING: 9-4 Fire Ball, 4-1 Summer Spell, 5-1 Pealings, Three Farthings, 6-1 Secret Service, 10-1 Khalidi, 16-1 Royal Piper

FORM FOCUS Summer Spell 14l 3rd of 10 to Disallowed in handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 110yd, good to firm); previously beat Eau De Cologne 6l in 7-runner novice hurdle at Ascot (2m 4f, good). Fire Ball beat Limit The Damage 8l in 14-runner novice hurdle at Lingfield (2m 3f 110yd, soft). Khalidi 26l 6th of 8 to Nashville Star in handicap chase at Windsor (2m, good), previously 11l 2nd of 6 to Good Vibes in handicap hurdle at Aintree (2m 110yd, good to soft). Secret Service 26l 4th of 8 to Sesame Seed in handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 4f 110yd, soft); previously 8¼l 4th of 6 to Good Vibes in handicap hurdle at Wetherby (2m, good to firm). Pealings 73l last of 5 to Splendid Thyne in handicap hurdle at Warwick (2m 3f, good to soft); previously 13l 3rd of 8 to Chabrol in novice hurdle grade 2 at Uttoxeter (2m 4f 110yd, soft). Royal Piper pulled up in handicap hurdle at Sandown (2m 6f, good to soft). Three Farthings 31l 5th of 7 to Sesame Seed in handicap hurdle at Worcester (2m 4f, soft); previously beat Mutanassib 2l in 10-runner maiden hurdle at Lingfield (2m 110yd, soft).

FIRE BALL was impressive at Lingfield and may follow up

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
D Gandolfo	8	18	44.4	A Maguire	26	99	26.3
F Doumen	4	10	40.0	A Thornton	5	19	26.3
P Webber	4	10	40.0	N Williamson	16	76	21.1
C Mann	4	13	30.8	M A Fitzgerald	20	110	18.2
R Alner	11	37	29.7	R Dunwoody	17	100	17.0
D Nicholson	20	74	27.0	P Hide	7	58	12.1

RACING NEXT WEEK

MONDAY: Haydock Park (first race, 1.10), Musselburgh (1.00), Taunton (12.50).

TUESDAY: Carlisle (1.00), Plumpton (1.10), Stratford (1.20).

WEDNESDAY: Catterick (1.10), Fontwell Park (12.45), Warwick (12.30).

THURSDAY: Lingfield Park (AW, 1.05), Catterick (12.50), Cheltenham (C4, 12.30), Leicester (12.55), Exeter (1.10), Windsor (12.50).

FRIDAY: Southwell (AW, 1.00), Ayr (12.40), Newbury (1.20).

SATURDAY: Lingfield Park (AW, 12.40), Musselburgh (12.25), Uttoxeter (1.05), Newbury (BBC, 12.45).

Flat meetings in bold

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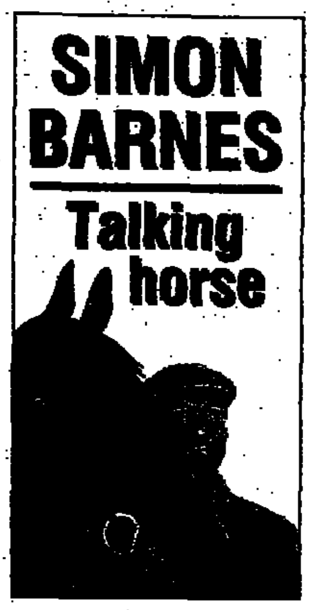
هكذا من الأصل

Grey hero still Dessie after all these years



A couple of weeks ago, my colleague, Robert Crampton, wrote about a national love object, *Ruud Gullit. And he* destroyed every preconception about his subject. He wrote that his man was vain, puffed up with self-importance, off hand, dismissive, impatient and rather ill-mannered.

It is my turn to write about a national love object now: one perhaps more greatly loved, even better looking and even more conscious of his good looks. The name of the hero is Desert Orchid. I found he was vain, puffed up with self-importance, off-hand, dismissive, impatient and rather ill-mannered.

And, of course, quite wonderful. I punched him lightly on the neck a few times — not a tactic you can work with a footballer — and told him he was a cross old bugger and where were his manners, and put your ears forward and all four paws on the ground.

So, having put me in my *place, he took his pat* and returned with civilised nose butts. They tell me that he accepts kisses and all kinds of slobbering tokens of affection from his fans on open days. But, right then, he was tacked up and ready to work. This is an animal of quite unique strength of character — you wouldn't expect him to be *easygoing. He won races and* hearts through his strength and dominant nature. You do not set these things aside just because you've retired.

Boxing Day was ever his day of days, of course, when he won the King George at Kempton more or less as and when he liked, and did so four times in all. Yesterday, he was invited to Kempton to parade before the — his — race. It wouldn't be right not to.

Has any horse in history inspired the love that Dessie did and does? He even had his own fan club, founded when his fame was at its peak. An expert on these matters predicted that it would last two years, and could never outlast the horse's retirement.

The fan club not only survives, it continues to bring in new members. *And not racing* people, either; still less horsey people. Dessie could not only leap fences, he leapt boundaries of all kinds. He was the horse that united the horsey and the non-horsey worlds.

There is much in Dessie's enduring appeal that is obvious. First, he is a grey — whiter than ever, at 18, for as a three-year-old tentatively feeling his way on the Flat, he was the gun-metal grey of James Bond's cigarette case. Horses, like humans, acquire more and more white hairs as they grow older.

Being a grey, and generally the only grey in the race, made him instantly recognisable. In fact, many racehorse owners cannot actually recognise their own horses. One of the great skills of training is to identify a *horse* for its owner without giving offence. But everyone can recognise Dessie.

He was also recognisable because he was the one at the front. The place of other horses in Dessie's world is a deferential distance behind. His sense of herd dominance was and is of the incontinent kind: he could not bear to bide his time, not for an instant. But perhaps the true secret of the love that Desert Orchid inspired was his *fallibility. His* greatness was flawed: and that touched the hearts of his followers as nothing else could.

A dominant male strikes poses: 'I'm the best horse around. I honestly recommend you believe that'

Red Rum is the only possible rival to Desert Orchid in the race for their love. And Red Rum, with three wins in the Grand National (not to mention two seconds), was arguably the greater racehorse. But Red Rum was about certainty.

He did more than seemed possible to remove the element of chance from the great lottery of the National. It was his ability, his uncanny certainty, *that was his stock in* trade. His racing greatness was, shockingly, unflawed.

But Dessie's flaws were obvious. He could not abide racing left-handed: his trainer, David Elsworth always reckoned he was a stone better on a right-handed course like Kempton. Cheltenham, of course, is left-handed. Dessie had to race for the Gold Cup, the ultimate accolade, by giving away a stone's advantage. That he won at all is remarkable. His subsequent two thirds probably inspired more affection even than his win.

He never ran in the National. To run or not to run? It was a national debate, nothing less. In a poll, something like 99 per cent of *Daily Mail* readers said that Dessie should not be forced by his "greedy owners" to take on Becher's and the rest.

"We lost our nerve," said one of the aforementioned and certainly ungreedy owners, Midge Burridge. "I mean, what if he had fallen? Or been brought down? What if he had been hurt?" For the question of running or not running the horse was no longer a matter between owner and trainer. The Burridges did not own a horse. They had stewardship of a national treasure, still living.

And living still, very much so. "Still pulls your arms out," Niall Moran, getting a leg-up onto his impatient mount, said. "Can *still* get a bit stroppy," Fay Lucas, who was "doing" the horse at Elsworth's yard, said.

For Dessie had left his field of mooching retirement and was back with Elsworth for a few weeks to prepare himself for Kempton. And in a fine good temper with himself and the world, too.

There he was, leading out the yearling fillies, daft little tarts of horses skittering and leaping and spooking at the photographer or anything else that caught their eyes. Any excuse.

And there at their head, the big grey, swaggering like Arnold Schwarzenegger. Horses pose. It is an aspect of communication, reading and sending the messages of body language are at the heart of the horsey life — for horses, or for their humans.

And a dominant male strikes poses: tall as he can, puffed up, imposing. On a shallow rise on a grassy plain a posing male can be seen for miles: I am the best horse around. I honestly recommend that you believe that.

All male horses do it: but Dessie does it to the point of self-caricature. He is a horse manifestly conscious of his greatness: he is no three-year-old wet-behind-the-ears classic winner, but a mature individual who, in his way, quietly rages against the dying of the light.

That is perhaps the most endearing trait of all. I sat on his back for a moment, because Elsworth kindly and rightly thought I would like to walk away saying I had done so. I felt pretty tall and proud up there. But he'd expect that.

PHOTOGRAPHS: HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Shades of grey: Desert Orchid, still the leader of the pack, still the dominant male, leads out the yearling fillies for morning gallops

Simon Barnes prepares to sit proud and tall in Desert Orchid's saddle

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Cyborgo has ingredients to satisfy Pipe's appetite

BY CHRIS McGRATH

WITH the nation numbly replete after its Christmas excesses, there could be no better occasion for Martin Pipe to show what has driven him to so many training *records* — an appetite for success that is never satisfied.

Whether scraping together a mound of morsels in West Country selling hurdles or hoisting a whole ox off the spit in the Champion Hurdle, Pipe is a glutton for winners.

Today he returns to one of his favourite restaurants, Chepstow and can be expected to order "the usual". Pipe saddles four runners in his quest for a sixth Coral Welsh National in eight runnings, and the unpalatable truth for his rivals is that one of them, Cyborgo, looks today's special.

In a race that suits some runners merely because it obscures their deficiencies during a journey of nearly four miles in muddy ground, Cyborgo offers a touch of authentic class. Good horses like Carvill's Hill, Master Oats and Bonanza Boy have defied similar weights in this race and Cyborgo relishes a test of stamina himself.

Pipe has laid him out for this race not only because conditions were always likely to suit him, but also because he goes so well fresh. In fact, one of Pipe's finest hours saw Cyborgo win the 1996 Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham on his seasonal debut.

Pipe: strong hand

Last season, Cyborgo took to fences with such flair that *Pipe ran him in the Gold Cup.* He was confounded by more experienced rivals on fast ground there, but was able to resume business as usual back in novice company at Aintree, despite similar conditions.

Everything is right for him today, and he should win with authority. Various winners could be explained as plausi*ble after the race; but* **Cyborgo** is the only one that might be perceived, in retrospect, as having been a "good thing".

Indian Tracker, among Pipe's other horses, makes some appeal. Though lightly raced, he jumps with confidence and shaped encouragingly behind See More Business (yesterday's King George VI Chase winner) at the Welsh track. He may, however, just exhaust himself with his rather energetic style. Dom Samourai surely lacks the class, while Evangelica prefers faster ground.

The biggest danger may yet emerge from Somerset, however, with Philip Hobbs saddling three runners himself. Bells Life made an encouraging reappearance at Cheltenham but his stamina is extremely suspect, while Samlee could by contrast labour into contention too late.

The each-way alternative is Greenhil Tare Away, who ran well for a long way on his reappearance here. He was not knocked about and could *improve. He is 23lb better off* with General Wolfe compared to his defeat of that horse here two years ago.

General Wolfe's jumping rather goes to pieces under pressure anyway, and the same is true of Belmont King, who needs to improve off this mark. Cariboo Gold, who does not find much off the *bridle, shaped well on his* return but may be found out by this gruelling test, while Banjo needs to convince with his attitude after running in snatches last time. Giventime likes it here, *but disappointed* on his last visit.

Dorans Pride faces stern test

THE Irish will tell you that there is only one place where you can find more Cheltenham Festival winners than at the Leopardstown Christmas meeting — and that is at the Cheltenham Festival (Chris McGrath writes). Ireland's leading candidate for the Tote *Cheltenham Gold Cup should* duly be revealed by the Ericsson Chase, highlight of tomorrow's card.

Though See More Business threw *down the* gauntlet on behalf of the British defence at Kempton yesterday, Dorans Pride retains Gold Cup favouritism, having continued to flourish since running a fine third as a novice in last season's race. Now, how*ever, he faces a stern test from* his rejuvenated compatriot, Imperial Call, who put up a brilliant performance to win the race in 1996, but lost his way last season.

Tomorrow's encounter should prove more informative than that between the two horses over an inadequate distance at Clonmel last month, Imperial Call blowing up just as a slow pace quickened. A minor training setback required him to miss a few days subsequently, but Fergie Sutherland enterprisingly sharpened him up over *hurdles at Navan last week*end.

Imperial Call went with plenty of dash there, once again over a shorter trip than ideal. His timber specialist opponents allowed him to build up a long lead, but only the smart Cockney Lad was able to get back in to the race, reeling him back on the flat: *Imperial Call was beaten a* length, but it was a distance back to the third.

Quite apart from the fact that Dorans Pride has still only been beaten on that one occasion, in the Gold Cup, out of ten completed starts over fences, he can reflect in additional glory today.

For he beat See More Business, the King George VI Chase winner, not once, but twice, in novice chases last term. If both the horses run to form tomorrow, a great race is in prospect.

LEOPARDSTOWN TOMORROW

GOING: HEAVY

2.40 ERICSSON CHASE (Grade I: £32,500: 3m) (6 runners)

1 15548-5 [illegible]TURN 122 (D,F,G,S) (6 Bailey Ltd) Mrs S Bramall 9-12-0 .... K Whelan
2 1115F-F [illegible]ORKET 21 (G,S) (S O'Sullivan) A P O'Brien 7-12-0 .... C F Swan
3 531-111 DORANS PRIDE 21 (CD,F,G,S) (T Doran) M Hourigan 8-12-0 .... R Dunwoody
4 F83P-22 IMPERIAL CALL 8 (CD,G,S) (Lisselan Farms Ltd) F Sutherland 8-12-0 .... C O'Dwyer
5 -422-413 MERRY GALE 21 (C,G,S) (H Stanley) J Dreaper 9-12-0 .... N Williamson
6 25-3128 OPERA HAT 21 (D,G,S) (Mrs T Cooper) J Fowler 9-11-9 .... P Carberry

BETTING: 4-5 Dorans Pride, 9-4 Imperial Call, 6-1 Merry Gale, 12-1 Opera Hat, 14-1 Antonin, 16-1 Corket.

1996: JOHNNY SETASIDE 7-12-0 R Dunwoody (2-1 fav) N Meade 7 ran

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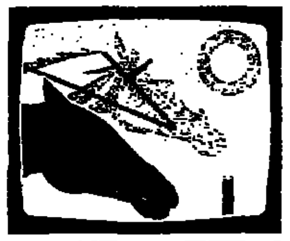
Sparkling Cone can follow up Towcester victory



TODAY'S RACING ON TELEVISION

CHEPSTOW

BBC2

12.50: Most of these are pretty exposed, certainly compared to **Sparkling Cone**, who bolted up for Venetia Williams in the Towcester mud. That was his first start over fences, so inexperience has to be a concern, but he looks thrown in with a penalty here. Well Timed needed similar ground to win over two miles at Newton Abbot, and will appreciate the extra distance, but Indian Arrow, fourth there, may not stay.

1.20: Rainwatch would have beaten Kilbride Lad more emphatically at Newbury but for walking through the final *hurdle. He enjoyed the mud* on the Flat, and can make all to stake his Triumph Hurdle claim. Borazon, a well-beaten third at Newbury, is nonetheless one to watch. Sad Mad Bad jumped fluently to win easily at Market Rasen, but only scrambled home when raised in class last time. Virtuoso has also done well in *modest company.*

1.55: see left.

2.30: Thursday Night's form is tested in the 12.50 race, *having just lost out to Well* Timed at Newton Abbot last time, but, even though he jumped better there, he might have less potential than Dr **Leunt.** A smart juvenile, Dr Leunt has returned from a wilderness of injury since going chasing, but was unlucky last time when falling at the last (remounted) with the race at his *mercy.* This shorter trip suits him better. Landed Gentry's disappointing effort last time contributed to his yard's quiet spell.

CHRIS McGRATH

KEMPTON PARK

CHANNEL 4

1.10: Edredon Bleu has taken time to acclimatise since moving from France where he won four chases two seasons ago, including two on soft ground. However, Henrietta Knight's five-year-old jumped particularly well to win at Leicester. Despite being 6lb out of the handicap here, he has scope for further improvement. Kadi appears out of sorts at the moment, while Southolt will do well to overcome a 784-day absence. Coulton still looks a shade high in the weights, which leaves Super Tactics as the main danger. Stepped up to today's trip for the first time here 38 days ago, Robert Alner's chaser showed improved form.

1.45: The consistent Amlah is unproven on this going, unlike Dontleavethenest who won in the mud at Exeter before failing to cope with Chief's Song at Ascot. Sir Dante jumped well to win easily in modest company at Folkestone. However, that was on a sound surface. **Hurricane Lamp** has always looked like a chaser in the making. After a decent run against top opposition at Sandown on his debut over fences, he can oblige here, where trip and ground are in *his favour.*

2.20: Charlie Egerton's horses have been under a cloud, which makes tipping Shadow Leader a risky proposition. The outstanding novice hurdler of last year will love the ground and, if he is 100 per cent, he will take all the beating. However, it may be *prudent* to side with **Sanmartino**, who was a class above Shadow Leader on the Flat. Although he is best on a sound surface, the selection proved he could cope with sticky ground when beating I'm Supposin at Newbury.

2.55: Arfer Mole might have beaten Oatis Regrets but for a *spectacularly heavy fall at* Sandown (Redeemyourself beaten when fell two out). Provided that tumble has not left its mark, he must go close. Ciel De Brion, fourth in the Hennessy when 15lb out of the handicap, has ground conditions in his favour, but may not be suited by stepping back in trip. **Scoresheet** looks well treated and won snugly at Wincanton on his seasonal reappearance.

RICHARD EVANS

LEICESTER

THUNDERER

1.05 Andsuephi. 1.35 Fair And Fancy. 2.05 Wayfarers Way. 2.40 Jibber The Kibber. 3.10 Grunge. 3.40 Turnill House.

GOING: SOFT (CHASE COURSE GOOD) SIS

1.05 PYTCHLEY NOVICES HURDLE
(£3,239: 2m) (8 runners)

1 11-1 ANDSUEPHI 70 (D,G,S) C Brooks 5-11-5 .... D Gallagher
2 6F6- ALTHREY BLUE 252 R Peacock 8-10-12 .... S Wynne
3 GOLDEN HADEER 19F M Ryan 6-10-12 .... J Ryan
4 35 NOBLE ATHLETE 54 (BF) Mrs J Pitman 5-10-12 .... R Farrant
5 POU NOU Mrs P Sly 4-10-12 .... W Marston
6 04 URGENT SWIFT 18 M Pitman 4-10-12 .... J R Kavanagh
7 00 FUNKY 14 F Jordan 4-10-7 .... J Supple
8 05 NEEDWOOD NUTKIN 17 B Morgan 4-10-7 .... B Clifford

1-2 Andsuephi, 9-2 Urgent Swift, 7-1 Golden Hadeer, Noble Athlete, 20-1 Pou Nou, Funky, 25-1 Althrey Blue, Needwood Nutkin.

1.35 HOBY SELLING HURDLE
(£2,024: 2m) (11)

1 2344 EVEZIO RUFO 10 (B,D,F) N Littmoden 5-11-5 .... R Farrant
2 -3P2 FAIR AND FANCY 16 (CD,G,S) Miss M Milligan 6-11-5 .... D Gallagher
3 5-05 GLOWING PATH 29 (CD,F,S) R Hodges 7-11-5 .... T Dascombe
4 66P- BALMORAL PRINCESS 262 (F) D McCain 4-11-0 .... S Wynne
5 PP/5 CHALLENGER ROW 18 (D,S) Mrs L Jewell 7-10-12 .... P Henley (3)
6 GLENRAZIE 302F J L Harris 4-10-12 .... J Supple
7 50-6 KING OF THE BLUES 44 J King 5-10-12 .... W Marston
8 3535 ROYAL HAND 21 (V) R Armson 7-10-12 .... Mr R Armson
9 00 SUITOR 28 S Dow 4-10-12 .... J R Kavanagh
10 6566 TANIYAR 11 R Hollinshead 5-10-12 .... Gary Lyons
11 RISKY LOVER 33F T Bill 4-10-7 .... P Midgley (3)

11-4 Fair And Fancy, 7-2 Evezio Rufo, King of The Blues, 9-2 Glowing Path, 7-1 Taniyar, 8-1 Royal Hand, 14-1 Suitor, 16-1 others.

2.05 QUORN NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE
(£4,500: 2m 1f) (5)

1 2-51 WAYFARERS WAY 16 (D,G,S) N Henderson 6-11-11 .... J R Kavanagh
2 /2-P YOUBETTERBELIEVEIT 28 (F,G) C Brooks 8-11-10 .... M Berry (7)
3 1-25 NEW LEAF 22 (D,S) D Gandolfo 5-11-0 .... G Upton
4 5331 ASTRAL INVASION 11 (B,F,G) T Wall 6-10-8 (7ex) .... Gary Lyons
5 52-0 COSA FUAIR 23 K Bailey 7-10-5 .... P Henley (3)

5-4 Wayfarers Way, 3-1 Astral Invasion, 7-2 Youbetterbelieveit, 8-1 New Leaf, 10-1 Cosa Fuair

2.40 LEICESTERSHIRE SILVER FOX HANDICAP CHASE (£9,520: 2m 4f 110yd) (9)

1 25-3 GARNWIN 15 (CD,F,G,S) N Henderson 7-11-10 .... J R Kavanagh
2 1FF/ JIBBER THE KIBBER 638 (CD,S) Mrs J Pitman 8-11-9 .... R Farrant
3 -425 MISTER DRUM 22 (D,F,G,S) M Wilkinson 8-11-7 .... W Marston
4 -316 SHINING LIGHT 23 (CD,F,G,S) D Nicholson 8-11-3 .... Mr D McPhail (7)
5 1P4- DISTINCTIVE 271 (C,D,G,S) M Wilkinson 8-10-12 .... I Lawrence
6 UP/P FALMOUTH BAY 37 (G,S) O Sherwood 8-10-11 .... G Upton
7 -512 SISTER ROSZA 10 (D,S) Mrs S Lamyman 9-10-6 .... J Magee (3)
8 -232 IN TRUTH 18 (D,G,S) S Gollings 9-10-3 .... D Gallagher
9 -111 MANOR MIEO 18 (V,D,F,G,S) G Prodromou 11-10-0 .... X Aizpuru (5)

3-1 Garnwin, 4-1 *Jibber The Kibber*, 11-2 Shining Light, 6-1 Mister Drum, 7-1 Manor Mieo, 8-1 Sister Rosza, 10-1 Distinctive, In Truth, 25-1 Falmouth Bay.

3.10 HANCOCK HANDICAP HURDLE
(£4,120: 2m 4f 110yd) (9)

1 304/ IMAD 557F (G,S) K Comerford 7-12-0 .... S Wynne
2 2225 FIVE FLAGS 14 (F,G,S) Mrs S Smith 9-11-10 .... R Wilkinson (5)
3 31-5 GRUNGE 21 (S) D Murray Smith 9-11-5 .... D Gallagher
4 1-F4 DUBLIN TREASURE 19 (S) J Neville 5-11-0 .... T Dascombe
5 4-32 NEEDWOOD POPPY 21 (G) B Morgan 9-10-12 .... B Clifford
6 3P24 SIGMA WIRELESS 16 (D,F,G) T Etherington 8-10-10 .... W Marston
7 535/ GREEN CRUSADER 598 (V,S) Mrs V Ward 6-10-10 .... J R Kavanagh
8 -U41 MILLMOUNT 11 (B,G,S) T McGovern 7-10-7 .... M Batchelor (7)
9 50-5 SHARIAKANNDI 14 J King 5-10-4 .... D J Kavanagh (5)

7-2 Five Flags, 4-1 Needwood Poppy, 9-2 Millmount, 5-1 Grunge, 7-1 Dublin Treasure, Sigma Wireless, 12-1 Shariakanndi, 16-1 others.

3.40 GALLOWTREE HANDICAP HURDLE
(£2,987: 2m) (8)

1 4315 COINTOSSER 18 (BF,CD,F,S) K Morgan 4-12-0 .... P Morris (5)
2 0314 TURNILL HOUSE 23 (G) W Musson 5-11-4 .... D Gallagher
3 08/6 EBEN AL HABEEB 10 (S) D McCain 6-11-3 .... S Wynne
4 -031 DONTDRESSFORDINNER 10 (D,F,G) R Hodges 7-11-0 .... T Dascombe
5 0/06 VASILIEV 16 (B,CD,F,S) S Gollings 9-10-12 .... R Farrant
6 6523 CARROLLS ROCK 10 (S) C Mann 6-10-3 .... J Magee (3)
7 -306 SALISONG 9 (CD,S) J Whyte 8-10-2 .... W Walsh (7)
8 UP-0 ZESTI 16 (G) P Howling 5-10-0 .... J R Kavanagh

11-4 Dontdressfordinner, 7-2 Turnill House, 4-1 Cointosser, 5-1 Carrolls Rock, 8-1 Vasiliev, 10-1 Salisong, 12-1 Eben Al Habeeb, 14-1 Zesti

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: N Henderson, 9 winners from 29 runners, 31.0%; J King, 4 from 14, 28.6%; D Nicholson, 14 from 54, 25.9%; C Brooks, 3 from 13, 23.1%; O Sherwood, 4 from 22, 18.2%; ; Mrs J Pitman, 8 from 56, 14.3%.

JOCKEYS: W Marston, 10 winners from 68 rides, 14.7%; J Kavanagh, 3 from 28, 10.7%. Only qualifiers

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WETHERBY

THUNDERER

1.00 Bamburgh Boy. 1.30 Dawn Mission. 2.00 Ardrina. 2.35 Ask Tom. 3.05 Sounds Fyne. 3.35 Dan De Man.

GOING: SOFT SIS

1.00 BRADFORD JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE
(3-Y-O: £3,127: 2m) (9 runners)

1 5 BAMBURGH BOY 28 T Easterby 10-12 .... L Wyer
2 FARHAN 207F K Morgan 10-12 .... A S Smith
3 0 IN THE GENES 23 I Williams 10-12 .... R Johnson
4 LOCKSILL 40F A Smith 10-12 .... N Horrocks (7)
5 55 LYMAX 24 J Howard Johnson 10-12 .... D Parker
6 40 MYOSOTIS 15 P Hiatt 10-12 .... E Husband (3)
7 NORMAN CONQUEST 94F M Hammond 10-12 .... R Garritty
8 4 SALTIMBANCO 87F N Waggott 10-12 .... M Foster
9 26 THE REAL MCCOY 39 (BF) Mrs J Ramsden 10-12 .... D Thomas (7)

5-4 Bamburgh Boy, 5-1 Farhan, 7-1 The Real Mccoy, 8-1 In The Genes, Lymax, Norman Conquest, 14-1 Saltimbanco, 25-1 others

1.30 HARRY WHARTON NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£3,602: 2m 4f 110yd) (6)

1 251F DAWN MISSION 21 (B,BF,F,G) T Easterby 5-11-10 .... L Wyer
2 /331 MINSTER GLORY 10 (F,G) M W Easterby 6-11-7 (6ex) .... R Johnson
3 3-01 DESERT BRAVE 14 (G) Mrs S Smith 7-10-13 .... G F Ryan (5)
4 -535 DANBYS GORSE 30 (D,G) J Jefferson 5-10-12 .... B Storey
5 6/4F ORGAN RECITAL 8 D Brennan 8-10-11 .... M Brennan
6 66/2 BROADWATER BOY 41 M Hammond 9-10-9 .... Mr C Bonner (3)

15-8 Dawn Mission, 5-2 Minster Glory, 7-2 Desert Brave, 13-2 Broadwater Boy, 7-1 Organ Recital, 8-1 Danbys Gorse.

2.00 LONG MARSTON HANDICAP HURDLE
(£4,981: 2m 7f) (8)

1 11/2 GREAT EASEBY 12 (D,G,S) W Storey 7-11-11 .... R McGrath (3)
2 11-0 INN AT THE TOP 15 (F,G) J Turner 5-11-8 .... R Supple
3 0-12 CAMPAIGN 14 (D,F,G) M Hammond 6-11-0 .... R Garritty
4 530- DALLY BOY 291 (F,G) T Easterby 5-10-13 .... L Wyer
5 114- ARDRINA 248 (G,S) F Murphy 6-10-12 .... Mr S Durack (5)
6 210/ LETHAL COCKTAIL 985 (BF,S) J Howard Johnson 8-10-9 .... A S Smith
7 /456 HIT THE CANVAS 14 (C,F,G) Mrs M Reveley 6-10-3 .... G Lee
8 -3d3 DOCKMASTER 17 (BF,G,S) Miss M Milligan 6-10-0 .... C McCormack (5)

11-4 Great Easeby, 3-1 Campaign, 4-1 Ardrina, 6-1 Inn At The Top, 8-1 Dockmaster, 10-1 Dally Boy, 12-1 Hit The Canvas, 20-1 Lethal Cocktail

2.35 CASTLEFORD CHASE
(Grade II: £18,640: 2m) (5)

1 4-P1 ASK TOM 21 (D,F,G,S) T Tate 8-11-10 .... R Garritty
2 -365 DOWN THE FELL 39 (D,F,G,S) J Howard Johnson 8-11-10 .... A S Smith
3 -122 VIKING FLAGSHIP 21 (CD,F,G,S) D Nicholson 10-11-10 .... R Johnson
4 24-2 LORD DORCET 7 (D,F,G,S) J Charlton 7-11-0 .... B Storey
5 -313 NATIVE MISSION 14 (D,G,S) J FitzGerald 10-11-0 .... L Wyer

6-5 Ask Tom, 5-4 Viking Flagship, 13-2 Lord Dorcet, 14-1 Down The Fell, Native Mission

3.05 APPLETON ROEBUCK NOVICES CHASE
(£3,678: 3m 1f) (7)

1 /2/1 SOUNDS FYNE 28 (G,S) J FitzGerald 8-11-5 .... R Garritty
2 /444 ERMINE STREET 15 D Brennan 9-11-0 .... M Brennan
3 22/3 FEELS LIKE GOLD 21 (S) G Richards 9-11-0 .... B Harding
4 11/P GREVILLE AGAIN 26 (S) D Nicholson 9-11-0 .... R Johnson
5 23/4 OVER THE CORRIB 18 (S) J Curtis 7-11-0 .... J Callaghan
6 PP-P SHARE OPTIONS 57 (BF,D,F,S) T Easterby 6-11-0 .... L Wyer
7 6503 SUL FOSSO 10 Mrs S Smith 5-10-13 .... G F Ryan (5)

5-6 Sounds Fyne, 11-4 Feels Like Gold, 7-1 Greville Again, Share Options, 10-1 Ermine Street, 16-1 Over The Corrib, 25-1 Sul Fosso

3.35 BRAMHAM NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE
(£2,898: 2m) (10)

1 4-21 THE BUTTERWICK KID 17 (D,S) R Fahey 4-12-0 .... L Wyer
2 32-6 FOREVER NOBLE 14 M Hammond 4-11-8 .... R Garritty
3 2155 THUNDERPOINT 18 (G) T Easterby 5-11-8 .... J Callaghan
4 1223 CHINA KING 26 (BF,D,F,G) J FitzGerald 6-11-2 .... F Leahy (3)
5 3164 CLAIRE'S DANCER 50 (D,F) A Turnell 4-11-1 .... C Rae (7)
6 3233 SOLDIER MAK 18 J Mackie 4-10-10 .... E Husband (3)
7 2-51 TABRIZ 15 (D,G) P Awson 4-10-9 .... O Pears
8 /244 KEY GRIP 50 Mrs S Smith 6-10-5 .... G F Ryan (5)
9 3P01 DAN DE MAN 12 (D,G) Miss L Siddall 6-10-0 (7ex) .... M Foster
10 5-00 PUBLIC WAY 10 N Chamberlain 7-10-0 .... L O'Hara

3-1 The Butterwick Kid, 4-1 Dan De Man, 11-2 Forever Noble, Tabriz, 13-2 Key Grip, 7-1 China King, 8-1 Thunderpoint, 10-1 others

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: Mrs M Reveley, 52 winners from 196 runners, 26.5%; D Nicholson, 17 from 65, 26.2%; G Richards, 28 from 122, 23.0%; T Easterby, 18 from 82, 22.0%; D Brennan, 5 from 26, 19.2%; J Howard Johnson, 16 from 84, 19.0%; J Jefferson, 6 from 35, 17.1%; F Murphy, 3 from 19, 15.8%.

JOCKEYS: R Johnson, 7 winners from 29 rides, 24.1%; L Wyer, 39 from 166, 23.5%; M Brennan, 5 from 29, 17.2%; R McGrath, 3 from 19, 15.8%; L O'Hara, 3 from 21, 14.3%; F Leahy, 5 from 40, 12.5%; G Lee, 3 from 24, 12.5%

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Chepstow: 2.30 Landed Gentry.

هكذا من الإهل

ICE HOCKEY

Import tax holding back game in Britain

By Norman de Mesquita

HALFWAY through the second season of the Superleague, it is hard to be optimistic about the state of the game in Britain. The eight teams competing at the top level appear to be living beyond their means and, although there are several promises of new and bigger arenas, it will be some time before they become reality.

Only Newcastle Cobras are struggling to stay in touch with the rest and there are, mercifully, few one-sided games. Most clubs, however, rely far too much on imported talent, offering minimal opportunities for those who are trained in Britain.

It is ironic that Jonathan Weaver and the Johnson brothers are among Newcastle's more consistent performers, but they emerged from the the production line at Durham Wasps before Sir John Hall took over the team and moved it to Newcastle.

In recent years Cardiff Devils have produced many of their own players but they have now seen fit to sign a 37-year-old Swedish defenceman. In the early years of the sport's most recent revival, Streatham offered great encouragement to youngsters but, until the present owner of the rink reseats his arena, there is no chance of the Redskins being reformed.

Outside the Superleague, there is an integrated competition offering exciting and competitive sport. But some teams at this level also include far too many imports, born out of a desire for instant success.

Discipline is a problem, particularly in the Superleague, and a recent brawl at Sheffield did the sport a great disservice. It must be up to the coaches to impress upon their players that they cannot afford to feature in such unsavoury incidents if sponsorship is to be attracted.

The only national sponsor is Benson and Hedges and, in the present political climate, that support has to be seen as having a limited expectation of life.

The status of the Great Britain team seems uncertain and nothing has been said about whether Peter Woods is to remain the national coach.

	P	W	D	L	OL	F	A	Pts
Manchester	18	9	6	3	1	77	58	22
Ayr	15	9	5	1	2	58	41	21
Nottingham	17	9	5	3	0	62	52	21
Sheffield	16	8	6	2	1	62	50	19
Bracknell	17	8	8	1	1	53	66	18
Cardiff	14	7	5	2	1	49	43	17
Basingstoke	15	4	8	3	1	47	59	12
Newcastle	18	3	14	1	1	38	77	8

OL column indicates games lost in overtime. Teams are awarded one point for each loss

CRICKET

England's World Cup reign ends in acrimony

From Thrasy Petropoulos in Madras

ENGLAND'S campaign to retain the women's World Cup came to a controversial and bitterly disappointing end yesterday when they were defeated by New Zealand. Ultimately, poor batting cost them victory in this semi-final: falling 20 runs short of a target of 176 on a decent batting surface, they scarcely deserved to reach the final.

They were not helped, though, by the decision of the umpires, Muralidharan and Venketesan, to reduce the number of overs in their innings to 49, on the basis that they had exceeded the time limit in bowling their 50 overs when New Zealand batted.

It was a decision that left the coach, Megan Lear, fuming: "The umpires hadn't taken the drinks breaks into account which, according to the World Cup rules, they had to. I went to clear this up with them between innings and they said they had looked at the rules and there would be no reduction. It was not until 12 overs to go that it was mentioned again that there were only going to be 49 overs. Quite where that came from, I don't know."

Lear claimed that, at a management meeting in Delhi before the tournament, it had been made clear that two five-minute drinks breaks would not be included in the three hours allocated for each side to bowl their overs.

It is questionable whether the extra over would have affected the outcome of the match, but the confusion should never have arisen midway through the innings. The last five wickets fell for 28 runs as the run-rate mounted and tempers boiled over in sweltering conditions.

By restricting New Zealand to 175 for six, the England bowlers, for the first time on this tour, had shown their true capabilities. A total of 18 wides was the only blemish, but that was partly because of strict umpiring: the New Zealand bowlers conceded 14 wides.

As expected, New Zealand struggled against the leg spin of Kathryn Leng and Charlotte Edwards: Leng conceded only 26 runs off her 12 overs and Edwards picked up the prized wicket of Debbie Hockley, the opening batsman, who batted for 35 overs in compiling 43 runs.

The England reply faltered at the start: within four overs Helen Plimmer had been dismissed and, after four promising boundaries, Edwards became frustrated with the accuracy of Catherine Campbell, the off spinner, and, not for the first time, perished by playing across the line.

Sue Metcalfe and Jane Cassar were run out and Jan Brittin laboured 2½ hours and 88 balls over 32 runs before she went in a vain attempt to increase the tempo.

CRAIG PRENTIS / ALLSPORT

Brittin dives successfully to make her ground as Rebecca Rolls, the New Zealand wicketkeeper, appeals for a run-out

Then came the unexpected announcement. Play was held up twice as Karen Smithies, the England captain, attempted to resolve the confusion with the umpires, who claimed at no stage to have altered their original stance. Smithies was out first ball aiming an angry heave to mid-wicket off Hockley.

Whatever the circumstances of their defeat, England know that a World Cup final at Eden Gardens was allowed to slip from their grasp. Only while Edwards was batting freely did they look capable of reaching their target. A lack of experience in chasing totals under pressure told against them. "As long as we had wickets intact it was always a target we could have achieved, but it wasn't to be," Smithies said. "We never really got going in the early stages of the innings and lost wickets regularly. Then came the decision of the umpires: one over could have made a big difference."

England, world champions no more, travel to Calcutta today to watch the final between Australia and New Zealand on Monday.

SCOREBOARD FROM MADRAS

NEW ZEALAND

D Hockley c Leng b Edwards 43
E Drumm lbw b Smithies 4
S Fruin run out 29
K Withers b Smithies 35
*M Lewis b Reynard 13
K Ramel st Cassar b Smithies 19
C Nicholson not out 3
S McLauchlan not out 1
Extras (b 2, lb 8, w 18) 28
Total (6 wkts, 50 overs) 175

†R Rolls, K Brown and C Campbell did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-8, 2-92, 3-101, 4-128, 5-168, 6-172.

BOWLING: Taylor 10-1-29-0; Smithies 10-2-40-3; Leng 10-0-26-0; Reynard 10-1-38-1; Connor 5-0-14-0; Edwards 5-1-18-1.

ENGLAND

H Plimmer lbw b Withers 1
C Edwards b Campbell 25
B Daniels lbw b McLauchlan 30
S Metcalfe run out 9
†J Cassar run out 6
*K Smithies c Lewis b Hockley 0
J Brittin st Rolls b Nicholson 32
M Reynard run out 12
K Leng c and b Nicholson 12
C Connor run out 3
C Taylor not out 3
Extras (lb 5, w 14, nb 3) 22
Total (47.5 overs) 155

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-3, 2-43, 3-78, 4-100, 5-116, 6-117, 7-124, 8-147, 9-147.

BOWLING: Withers 7.5-2-22-1; Nicholson 10-3-29-2; Brown 6-0-21-0; Campbell 10-1-45-1; McLauchlan 9-2-16-1; Ramel 2-0-6-0; Hockley 3-0-11-1.

Umpires: P Venketesan and N Muridharan.

Waugh rescues Australia

By Our Sports Staff

ANOTHER combative innings in adversity from Steve Waugh rescued Australia from 77 for four to a comfortable 206 for four at the close of the first day of the first Test against South Africa in Melbourne yesterday.

Waugh's stonewall resistance gave way to accomplished stroke-making to leave him unbeaten on 87 at stumps. Waugh and Ricky Ponting, with 56 not out, wrested the initiative from Hansie Cronje's side after two sessions of slow scoring. In eight Tests against South Africa, Waugh has amassed 760 runs at an average of 84.44, with two centuries.

Waugh and Ponting's 129-run partnership took just 150 minutes — a significant turnaround after only 92 runs in the four hours up to tea. Ponting said: "It is important that we build a big first innings because the wicket is only going to get harder to bat on and [Shane] Warne is going to play a big part, because Pat Symcox did spin a few today."

In front of 73,812 spectators at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the largest Test crowd at the venue for 22 years, South Africa went to lunch with the three prized wickets of Matthew Elliott, Mark Taylor and Mark Waugh after conceding only 44 runs.

Australia laboured to 92 for four by tea, losing Greg Blewett, stumped for 26, as Richardson, 38, passed John Waite's South African wicketkeeping record with his 144th Test dismissal.

Just when Australia were ripe for a knockout blow, Waugh emphatically answered doubts about his form after a run of dismissals in the one-day triangular series. South Africa thought that they had seen the back of him when he edged a ball to Richardson with three overs left. But Donald's jubilation faded when the umpire, Steve Bucknor, signalled a no-ball. Then, on the third-last ball of the day, Waugh cut and was dropped by Kirsten at point off Pollock.

Shah putting faith in spin

From John Stern in Johannesburg

HAVING experienced the delights of Sun City on Christmas Day, the England under-19 team return to the serious business of their tour today with the second of two four-day internationals against South Africa, which will be played in Fochville, a rural community about 40 miles southwest of here.

Since the first international in Cape Town, where England were extremely fortunate to escape with a draw, the touring team's stock has been rising.

The arrival of Owais Shah this week and the return to fitness of Jonathan Powell, the Essex off spinner, has added experience to the side.

Their most recent game, which brought a welcome limited-overs win over South Africa Schools in Port Elizabeth, has added to confidence, mainly because of the quality of the opposition.

However, doubts still remain about the ability of this England side to pace themselves over the longer game. The habit of losing wickets in clusters, just before or after intervals, is one that will have to be cured quickly.

With the weather likely to be hot, England will probably play three spinners, Powell and Graeme Swann purveying off breaks and Chris Schofield leg spin.

Paul Franks, who led the side in the first international in Shah's absence, will again bear the brunt of the pace bowling after taking four for 65 in a South Africa total of 504 for eight.

"I'm happy with the way I'm bowling and I firmly believe that I can cause problems for all the South Africa top order," he said. "The arrival of Owais has given everyone a boost. It was important for the South Africans to see what he is capable of in the last one-day match. Hopefully there will be some jitters in their dressing-room."

NATWEST ENGLAND UNDER-19 (from): O A Shah, P J Franks, I N Flanagan, M A Gough, J O Grove, G R Haywood, R W T Key, R J Logan, G R Napier, S D Peters, J C Powell, C P Schofield, G P Swann, N J Wilton.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Tyson and Holyfield lining up for Lewis

BOXING: Lennox Lewis, of Britain, can look forward to multimillion pound contests in the second half of next year against Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson, after the breakdown of talks to stage his bout with Holyfield in April (Srikumar Sen writes).

Lewis, the World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight champion, is considering moving from HBO, the American television cable company that has him under contract for two more contests, to Showtime.

Holyfield, the World Boxing Association (WBA) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) title-holder, and Tyson, who is serving a 12-month ban, both box for Showtime.

The opponents being considered to meet Lewis in March are James Buster Douglas, Corrie Sanders, of South Africa, and Michael Moorer. Lewis will make a mandatory defence of his WBC title in July against Zeljko Mavrovic, of Croatia

One-day inquiry

CRICKET: Indian officials yesterday ordered an investigation into the abandonment of the second one-day international between India and Sri Lanka after the pitch was declared too dangerous for play. Sri Lanka had reached 17 for one from three overs on Thursday at Indore when the decision was taken. The ball had been breaking through the pitch's dusty top surface.

Leopards rule

BASKETBALL: London Leopards claimed a 122-108 victory over the Leicester Riders in the Budweiser League yesterday after some remarkable long-range shooting in the first half. Billy Mims's Leopards hit eight of their 11 three-point attempts before the interval and built a 20-point lead before the Riders fought their way back.

Sturgeon elusive

CYCLING: Carl Sturgeon, of Leicester, yesterday overcame a five-minute handicap to win the Clark's Cables grand prix cyclo-cross at Kenilworth for the third successive year.

RACING RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S NINE MEETINGS

Kempton Park

Going: soft, good to soft in places

12.40 (2m hdle) 1. **Enntante** (Mr T Doumen, 9-1); 2. Better Offer (7-1); 3. Shahrur (13-2). Zaralaska 4-6 fav. 7 ran. 12l, hd. F Doumen (Fr). Tote £13.00, £3.50, £1.80. DF £53.40. CSF £57.44.

1.10 (3m ch) 1. **Fiddling The Facts** (M A Fitzgerald, 5-2); 2. Forest Ivory (9-4 fav); 3. Ottowa (4-1). 6 ran. NR Bengers Moor. 6l, 6l. N Henderson. Tote £3.00, £1.40, £2.30. DF £4.20. CSF £7.54.

1.45 (2m hdle) 1. **Serenus** (M A Fitzgerald, 11-4 jt-fav); 2. Tibetan (11-4 jt-fav); 3. Kingsfold Pet (11-2). 7 ran. NR Bless Me Sister. 2½l, 18l. N Henderson. Tote £3.40; £2.10, £2.10. DF £4.20. CSF £9.59. Tricast £32.94.

2.20 see page 32.

2.55 (2m ch) 1. **Kadastrof** (A Thornton, 9-4); 2. Lake Kariba (6-4 fav); 3. Zabadi (5-1). 5 ran. NR Intermagic. 3½l, 17l. R Dickin. Tote £3.60; £1.90, £1.20. DF £1.90. CSF £5.82.

3.25 (3m 110yd hdle) 1. **Haile Derring** (C Llewellyn, 8-1); 2. Toby Brown (5-1); 3. Decyborg (11-1). Friendship (I) 5-4 fav. 6 ran. 5l, dist. N Twiston-Davies. Tote £11.50; £3.60, £2.00. DF £24.40. CSF £43.30.

Jackpot: £56,415.30 (0.1 winning tickets. Pool of £71,512.41 carried forward to Kempton Park today)

Placepot: £532.10. Quadpot: £60.70.

Ayr

Going: soft, good to soft in places

12.55 (2m hdle) 1. **Forzas** (R McGrath, 7-2); 2. Rullegio (7-4 fav); 3. Parson's Lodge (11-2). 10 ran. 3l, 3l. J J O'Neill. Tote £3.30; £1.90, £1.50, £2.10. DF £4.50. Trio £2.20. CSF £8.18. Tricast £25.52.

1.25 (2m ch) 1. **Welsh March** (J Callaghan, 6-5 fav); 2. La Riviera (10-1); 3. Cittadino (7-2). 8 ran. NR: Ham N'Eggs. 11l, 1½l. G Moore. Tote £1.80; £1.10, £4.00, £2.20. DF £6.00. Trio £21.30. CSF £11.39.

2.00 (2m 4f hdle) 1. **Easby Joker** (R McGrath, 8-1); 2. Tindles Bible (25-1); 3. Polar King (9-2). Hopeful Lord 7-4 fav. 7 ran. 1½l, 7l. S Kettlewell. Tote £12.70; £3.50, £5.20. DF £76.10. CSF £102.84.

2.35 (3m 1f ch) 1. **Judicious Captain** (Mr C Storey, 7-2); 2. Seeking Gold (7-2); 3. Peter (10-1). Naughty Future 3-1 fav. 7 ran. 3l, 6l. Mrs J Storey. Tote £5.80; £3.10, £1.70. DF £7.00. CSF £14.71.

3.10 (2m 4f ch) 1. **Rachael's Owen** (R McGrath, 6-1); 2. True Scot (10-1); 3. Solsgirth (6-4 fav). 6 ran. 3l, 11l. J Goldie. Tote £6.30; £2.10, £2.20. DF £14.10. CSF £45.81.

3.40 (2m 4f hdle) 1. **Palacegate King** (S Taylor, 5-2); 2. Rossel (6-4 fav); 3. Bells Hill Lad (14-1). 5 ran. 1l, 8l. A Whillans. Tote £3.40; £2.20, £1.70. DF £3.20. CSF £6.26.

Placepot: £541.40. Quadpot: £164.60.

Hereford

Going: soft, good to soft in places

12.35 (2m 3f 110yd hdle) 1. **Shore Party** (T Jenks, 11-4 fav); 2. Builder Boy (11-2); 3. Saras Delight (5-1). 13 ran. NR Gallant Tally, Oyster Delight, Western Sun. 4l, 9l. N Twiston-Davies. Tote £4.80; £2.10, £1.90, £2.40. DF £8.60. CSF £18.29.

1.05 (2m 3f 110yd hdle) 1. **The Village Way** (S Wynne, 5-6 fav); 2. Latchford (20-1); 3. Balios (33-1). 14 ran. NR Drama King, Mr Lambrini. 21l, 1½l. Miss V Williams. Tote £2.10; £1.30, £8.60, £5.40. DF £29.40. CSF £25.24.

1.35 (3m 2f hdle) 1. **Weather Wise** (J R Kavanagh, 5-2 fav); 2. St Mellion Leisure (5-1); 3. Just For A Reason (7-1). 7 ran. NR The Cheese Baron. 6l, ¾l. W Turner. Tote £3.20; £1.80, £3.20. DF £14.70. CSF £14.50. Tricast £70.04.

2.05 (2m 3f ch) 1. **Winnow** (J Culloty, 3-1); 2. Can't Say (9-2); 3. The Crooked Oak (10-1). Raphael Bodine 9-4 fav. 8 ran. NR Super Rascal, Wayfarers Way. 5l, 30l. Miss H Knight. Tote £3.70; £1.60, £1.30, £2.90. DF £4.60. CSF £17.46. Tricast £115.11.

2.35 (2m 3f 110yd hdle) 1. **High Low** (Miss E J Jones, 10-1); 2. Caracol (2-1 fav); 3. Lord Nitrogen (7-2). 11 ran. NR Little Street Blues, Secret Gift, The Brewer. 9l, 4l. I Jones. Tote £15.90; £3.00, £1.30, £1.60. DF £20.90. CSF £30.29. Tricast £84.42.

3.05 (3m 1f 110yd ch) 1. **Freddie Muck** (T Jenks, 13-8 fav); 2. Hopperdante (14-1); 3. First Harvest (16-1). 12 ran. Dist, 3½l. N Twiston-Davies. Tote £2.70; £1.70, £2.40, £2.20. DF £24.30. CSF £27.35.

3.35 (2m 1f hdle) 1. **Studio Thirty** (X Aizpuru, 2-1 fav); 2. Distant Storm (7-2); 3. Blaze Of Song (7-2). 10 ran. NR Don't Tell Tom, Mr Goonhilly. 1½l, 2l. R Dickin. Tote £3.40; £1.50, £2.10, £1.60. DF £3.30. CSF £10.66. Tricast £24.31.

Placepot: £55.80. Quadpot: £9.20.

Huntingdon

Going: good to soft, hurdles soft in places

12.30 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1. **Music Therapy** (J A McCarthy, 3-1); 2. Harlequin Chorus (4-1); 3. The Toiseach (5-2 fav). 9 ran. NR Inch Champion. 11l, 5l. Capt T Forster. Tote £4.50; £1.30, £1.60, £1.50. DF £16.10. CSF £15.42.

1.00 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1. **Occold** (Michael Brennan, 7-2); 2. Eserspray (5-1); 3. Garethson (3-1 fav). 10 ran. 1½l, 22l. G Hubbard. Tote £3.90; £1.40, £1.60, £1.60. DF £5.00. CSF £19.55.

1.30 (2m 5f 110yd hdle) 1. **Ernest William** (Michael Brennan, 7-4 fav); 2. Master Dancer (40-1); 3. The Brewer (7-2). 13 ran. NR Slightly Special. 14l, 1½l. G Hubbard. Tote £3.30; £1.70, £8.30, £1.90. DF £60.20. CSF £86.25. Tricast £242.74.

2.00 (3m ch) 1. **Ocean Leader** (J F Titley, 4-1); 2. Karenastino (6-1); 3. High Learie (5-2). Gems Lad 2-1 fav. 7 ran. NR Black Statement, Pavlova, Some Day Soon, Wot No Gin. 1½l, dist. Mrs D Haine. Tote £5.50; £2.80, £3.40. DF £16.50. CSF £27.26. Tricast £67.18.

2.30 (3m 2f hdle) 1. **Edmond** (R Thornton, 6-4 fav); 2. Banny Hill Lad (5-1); 3. Physical Fun (12-1). 15 ran. 14l, 8l. T Forster. Tote £3.00; £1.60, £2.40, £3.30. DF £9.90. CSF £10.40.

3.00 (2m 110yd ch) 1. **Days Of Thunder** (B Clifford, 12-1); 2. Fenwick's Brother (11-8 fav); 3. Sleazey (7-2). 6 ran. NR Above Auburn Bay. 5l, dist. Mrs S Odell. Tote £11.70; £3.20, £1.40. DF £8.80. CSF £29.86. Tricast £69.30.

3.30 (2m 110yd flat) 1. **Running Water** (M Richards, 5-1); 2. In The Van (5-1); 3. Sunuvugun (7-2 jt-fav). Hulk 7-2 jt-fav. 18 ran. NR Jet Specials. 7l, 7l. P Hedger. Tote £12.80; £3.30, £1.80, £2.70. DF £78.60. CSF £37.90.

Placepot: £21.70. Quadpot: £12.70.

Market Rasen

Going: heavy, soft in places

12.30 (2m 1f 110yd hdle) 1. **Tudor Falcon** (D Parker, 25-1); 2. Thomas Crown (9-4 fav); 3. African Sun (7-2). 7 ran. NR P Brandon Bridge, Oakbury. 7l, 2½l. P Bradley. Tote £36.40; £9.20, £1.70. DF £98.30. CSF £80.17. Tricast £238.31.

1.00 (3m 1f ch) 1. **Bassenhally** (W Marston, 9-4); 2. Market Gossip (7-4 fav); 3. Dandy Des. Plaums (12-1). 8 ran. NR: Pearl's Choice, Sirenic. 7l, 4l. Mrs P Sly. Tote £3.50; £1.80, £1.40, £3.10. DF £2.30. CSF £7.32. Tricast £38.25.

1.35 (4m 1f ch) 1. **Candwen** (W Worthington, 3-1); 2. Master Boston (4-1); 3. Price's Hill (7-4 fav). 5 ran. NR Cats Run, Woodlands Genhire. 28l, dist. T Greathead. Tote £4.20; £1.70, £1.70. DF £7.90. CSF £15.22.

2.05 (2m 3f 110yd hdle) 1. **Colour Code** (J Supple, 4-5 fav); 2. Ferrars (4-1); 3. Donnybrook (8-1). 12 ran. NR Cottage Craft. 11l, 3l. Mrs A Swinbank. Tote £2.60; £1.70, £1.60, £2.00. DF £3.10. CSF £4.68.

2.35 (2m 3f 110yd hdle) 1. **Lets Be Frank** (D Finnegan, 5-2); 2. Dana Point (2-1 jt-fav); 3. Nellogrity (2-1 jt-fav). 5 ran. NR Marchant Ming. ½l, 12l. N Chance. Tote £2.90; £1.60, £1.80. DF £2.80. CSF £7.95.

3.05 (2m 1f 110yd ch) 1. **Tejano Gold** (W Marston, 8-11 fav); 2. Non Vintage (9-4); 3. Cheeka (5-1). 4 ran. 1½l, 24l. P Bradley. Tote £1.60. DF £1.70. CSF £2.93.

3.35 (2m 1f 110yd hdle) 1. **Beher** (Miss R Clark, 4-1); 2. Shark (7-2); 3. Lord Hastie (5-1). Sally's Twins 9-4 fav. 10 ran. NR Carrolls Rock, Forget Paris, Katatonic, Stream On. ¾l, 1½l. S Clark. Tote £5.10; £1.40, £1.60, £1.80. DF £10.90. CSF £19.79.

Placepot: £24.70. Quadpot: £17.50.

Sedgefield

Going: soft

1.00 (3m 3f 110yd hdle) 1. **Birkdale** (R Supple, 10-11 fav); 2. For Cathal (7-4); 3. Kakashda (11-2). 7 ran. 2l, 30l. L Lungo. Tote £2.10; £1.70, £1.50. DF £1.90. CSF £2.55.

1.30 (3m 3f ch) 1. **Sirenic** (K Johnson, 9-2 jt-fav); 2. Tudor Fellow (9-2 jt-fav); 3. Kibby Bank (8-1). Dark Oak 9-2 jt-fav. 10 ran. NR: Rye Crossing. 15l, 28l. S Bell. Tote £4.00; £1.80, £1.80, £1.90. DF £5.80. CSF £24.05. Tricast £145.77.

2.00 (2m 5f ch) 1. **Chipped Out** (C McCormack, 7-4 jt-fav); 2. Callernoy (66-1); 3. Rivers Challenge (7-1). Executive Design 7-4 jt-fav. 13 ran. 3l, 20l. Martin Todhunter. Tote £3.20; £1.50, £10.40, £1.50. DF £275.60. CSF £167.79.

2.30 (2m 110yd ch) 1. **Marble Man** (D Bentley, 3-1 jt-fav); 2. Val De Rama (3-1 jt-fav); 3. Xaipete (3-1 jt-fav). 6 ran. NR: Kildrummy Castle, Shultan, Uk Hygiene. 6l, 22l. M Pall. Tote £4.40; £2.10, £1.70. DF £7.00. CSF £12.09. Tricast £26.00.

3.00 (2m 5f 110yd hdle) 1. **Toshiba Talk** (C McCormack, 9-4 fav); 2. Stylish Interval (6-1); 3. Toogoodtoforthisworld (8-1). 12 ran. 5l, 11l. B Ellison. Tote £2.90; £1.70, £2.20, £1.80. DF £15.80. CSF £16.29. Tricast £88.41.

3.30 (2m 1f hdle) 1. **Quango** (P Leahy, 5-1); 2. General's Orders (7-2); 3. Diamond Beach (9-2). Fatehalkhair (I) 3-1 fav. 8 ran. 26l, ½l. J Fitzgerald. Tote £7.90; £2.10, £1.10, £1.40. DF £9.90. CSF £21.82. Tricast £77.51.

Placepot: £40.40. Quadpot: £15.40.

Wetherby

Going: soft

12.45 (2m 4f 110yd hdle) 1. **Ardent Scout** (N Bentley, 11-1); 2. Nesayer (16-1); 3. Glenbower (4-1). Joe Shaw 7-4 fav. 13 ran. 5l, 4l. Mrs S Smith. Tote £16.30; £3.80, £4.90, £1.80. DF £165.40. Trio £151.20. CSF £159.87. Tricast £770.24.

1.15 (2m ch) 1. **Ham N'Eggs** (R Garritty, 4-6 fav); 2. Jolly Heart (11-4); 3. Arbeyjybus (16-1). 4 ran. NR Kadastrof, Shining Edge. 19l, dist. M Hammond. Tote £1.70. DF £1.90. CSF £2.75.

1.50 (2m hdle) 1. **New Inn** (Mr S Durack, 5-2); 2. House Of Dreams (4-1); 3. Samenid (11-1). Dr Bones 6-4 fav. 5 ran. NR: Kaitak. 1½l, 30l. S Gollings. Tote £3.50; £1.70, £1.70. DF £8.70. CSF £11.80.

2.25 (3m 1f ch) 1. **Strath Royal** (M Brennan, 3-1); 2. Major Bell (9-2); 3. Sparky Gayle (9-4). Colonel In Chief 13-8 fav. 4 ran. NR Awo Anosn. 13l, dist. O Brennan. Tote £3.30. DF £10.00. CSF £13.52.

2.55 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1. **Cumbrian Challenge** (L Wyer, 6-4 fav); 2. Bramblebery (11-2); 3. Northants (12-1). 6 ran. 5l, 5l. T Easterby. Tote £1.90; £1.60, £1.20. DF £3.40. CSF £8.71.

3.25 (2m hdle) 1. **Justin Mac** (P Carberry, 5-2); 2. Foundry Lane (4-5 fav); 3. High Express (12-1). 15 ran. NR Florentino, Lord Hastie. ¼l, 24l. J Fitzgerald. Tote £4.20; £1.70, £1.40, £3.50. DF £3.10. Trio £10.90. CSF £5.33.

Placepot: £41.00. Quadpot: £10.00.

Wincanton

Going: good to soft, soft in places

12.50 (2m hdle) 1. **Potter Again** (R Johnson, 11-8 fav); 2. Kendord Tina (12-1); 3. Kinnahalla (8-1). 13 ran. 2l, 16l. D Nicholson. Tote £2.50; £1.80, £4.20, £2.00. DF £15.80. Trio £40.10. CSF £15.89.

1.20 (2m ch) 1. **Robins Pride** (G Tormey, 11-1); 2. Morstock (13-2); 3. The Carrot Man (9-1). Storm Run 6-4 fav. 8 ran. 8l, 4l. C Popham. Tote £13.10; £2.60, £1.60, £1.20. DF £31.50. CSF £68.97. Tricast £807.94.

1.55 (2m 5f ch) 1. **Wayward King** (T Dascombe, 14-1); 2. Northern Starlight (2-1); 3. Glitter Isle (15-8 fav). 6 ran. NR: Amlah. R Hodges. Tote £16.50; £3.00, £1.80. DF £12.30. CSF £40.71.

2.30 (2m 6f hdle) 1. **Buckhouse Boy** (R Johnson, 11-1); 2. None Stirred (100-30); 3. Ivor's Flutter (3-1 fav). 10 ran. NR Amazon Express, Mutanassib, Olympian, Sheriff. Nk, 7l. D Nicholson. Tote £10.30; £2.90, £1.40, £1.50. DF £19.10. Trio £55.60. CSF £45.11. Tricast £129.37.

3.00 (3m 1f ch) 1. **Brave Highlander** (P Hide, 5-1); 2. Danger Baby (100-30); 3. Lint-on Rocks (11-4 jt-fav). Juitara 11-4 jt-fav. 6 ran. NR Sunley Bay. ½l, 1½l. J Gifford. Tote £6.40; £2.40, £1.90. DF £11.40. CSF £19.98.

3.30 (2m hdle) 1. **Catempo** (A Bates, 13-2); 2. Song Of Kenda (20-1); 3. Mr Darcy (5-2 fav). 9 ran. NR: Bet Wiltshire, Fabulous Mtoto, Milford Sound, Negative Equity, Welton Arsenal. 8l, ¾l. G McCourt. Tote: £8.80; £2.40, £5.40, £1.30. DF £89.10. Trio £105.60. CSF £99.07. Tricast £355.35.

Placepot: £53.20. Quadpot: £8.80.

Wolverhampton

Going: standard

1.15 (6f) 1. **Double-O** (J Quinn, 4-1 fav); 2. Ramsey Hope (6-1); 3. Mike's Double (9-2). 8 ran. 1½l, 1l. W Jarvis. Tote £4.90; £2.20, £3.00, £1.50. DF £27.50. CSF £25.66. Tricast £94.74.

1.40 (1m 100yd) 1. **Ahliyat** (W Ryan, 4-1); 2. Other Club (6-1); 3. Patina (20-1). Fayik 10-11 fav. 6 ran. 1½l, ½l. J Hills. Tote £4.30; £2.40, £3.20. DF £11.90. CSF £25.76.

2.15 (6f) 1. **Touchanova** (J Quinn, 8-1); 2. Comeuroftnetog (14-1); 3. Just For Tina (11-1). Night Auction 3-1 jt-fav. 7 ran. 2½l, hd. G Margarson. Tote £6.30; £3.60, £4.00. DF £25.60. CSF £40.27. Trio £45.90. Frolicking (3-1 jt-fav) and Strawsea (10-1) withdrawn: not under orders — rule 4 applies to all bets, deduction 30p in pound.

2.45 (6f) 1. **Redoubtable** (A Culhane, 3-1 fav); 2. Eastern Prophets (9-2); 3. Elite Hope (4-1). 8 ran. ½l, 1½l. D Chapman. Tote £5.00; £1.90, £1.70, £1.60. DF £18.30. CSF £16.11. Tricast £51.11.

3.15 (1m 100yd) 1. **Lionize** (W Ryan, 4-1); 2. Democrat (2-1 fav); 3. Queen's Pageant (25-1). 9 ran. 1½l, 3½l. Mrs J Cecil. Tote £6.30; £1.80, £1.40, £4.50. DF £5.40. Trio £36.20. CSF £10.42. Tricast £146.62.

3.50 (1m 4f) 1. **Rex Mundi** (A McCarthy, 6-4 fav); 2. Red Phantom (10-1); 3. Sidney The Kidney (14-1). 9 ran. NR: Tabasco Jazz. Nk, 8l. P Evans. Tote £2.50; £1.10, £2.50, £2.30. DF £12.10. Trio £41.80. CSF £16.35.

4.20 (1m 1f 79yd) 1. **Colins Choice** (P Bradley, 7-1); 2. Muara Bay (7-4 fav); 3. Xenophon Of Cunaxa (25-1). 11 ran. 1l, 1½l. J Spearing. Tote £7.00; £2.00, £1.70, £7.80. DF £11.30. Trio £241.70. CSF £20.64. Tricast £301.04.

4.50 (1m 1f 79yd) 1. **Mazeed** (A McCarthy, 9-4 fav); 2. Chadleigh Lane (10-1); 3. Guessmation (5-1). 9 ran. NR: Principal Boy. 6l, ½l. P Evans. Tote £5.10; £2.00, £1.70, £1.50. DF £23.80. Trio £7.90. CSF £23.43. Tricast £92.00.

Placepot: £595.90. Quadpot: £37.10.

Leopardstown

Going: heavy

1.30 (2m hdle) 1. **Rainbow Frontier** (C F Swan, 7-2); 2. Kharabar (9-10 fav); 3. Keeping The Faith (11-1). 9 ran. 3l, dist. A P O'Brien. Tote £3.90; £1.50, £1.30, £2.00. DF £3.00. CSF £7.81.

2.40 (2m 1f ch) 1. **Dardjini** (K P Gaule, 100-30); 2. Magical Lady (4-1); 3. Space Trucker (5-1). 11-4 fav Grey Guy. 9 ran. NR: Hill Society. 7l, 15l. N Meade. Tote £5.00; £2.10, £1.50, £1.80. DF £21.20. CSF £16.60.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm) L	Depth (cm) U	Conditions Piste	Conditions Off/p	Runs to resort	Weather (5pm)	°C	Last snow
ANDORRA Soldeu	35	75	good	varied	good	sun	8	21/12
(Mostly good skiing available)								
AUSTRIA Kitzbuhel	0	75	hard	heavy	worn	cloud	0	22/12
(Good skiing on the upper slopes)								
Obergurgl	80	120	good	powder	good	sun	-6	22/12
(Excellent skiing on fresh snow)								
FRANCE Alpe d'Huez	60	140	good	varied	good	fine	-4	21/12
(Generally good everywhere. Most lifts open)								
Avoriaz	85	70	good	heavy	good	cloud	-3	21/12
(Excellent skiing on runs above 1,800m)								
ITALY Cervinia	30	200	good	heavy	good	cloud	0	21/12
(Excellent skiing on all pistes)								
SWITZERLAND Saas Fee	45	150	good	varied	closed	cloud	0	21/12
(Very good skiing on open pistes)								
Verbier	10	110	good	varied	closed	cloud	1	21/12
(Fantastic skiing on Mont Fort, lower slopes worn or icy)								

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper.

HOCKEY

Lancashire turn tables on old rivals

By Sydney Friskin

LANCASHIRE, who were knocked out of the county championship semi-finals by Cheshire last season, turned the tables on their traditional rivals by beating them 2-1 in the annual Boxing Day match at Chester yesterday.

Peter Crutchley, the Cheshire manager, did not begrudge Lancashire their victory. "It was an even game but Lancashire stepped up a gear in the second half and deserved to win," he said.

After ten minutes, Bell put Lancashire ahead with a well-taken goal, while Renison levelled the scores from a cleverly worked short corner in the twentieth minute.

At half-time, Ashcroft, who had kept goal for Cheshire, was replaced by Stoneley, from Brooklands, who stood up well to the pressure exerted by Lancashire, but could not prevent Capper from scoring the winning goal ten minutes before the end.

However, Cheshire, who won the veterans match 4-3 and the under-21 encounter 5-0 earlier in the day, retained the Boxing Day Trophy. The fixtures were cancelled last year because of a frozen pitch.

CHESHIRE: C Ashcroft (Cannock); S Brassington (Brooklands), A Bradshaw (Sheffield), A Crutchley (Neston), G Williams (Brooklands), M Renison (Brooklands), D Cheshire (Deeside Ramblers, captain), D du Preez (Warrington), D Maguire (Brooklands), S Crutchley (Firebrands), S Livingstone (Brooklands). Substitute used: G Stoneley (Brooklands).

LANCASHIRE: D Hussey (Wigan); S Ayres (Southport), D Baxter (Warrington), J Bell (Brooklands), P Capper (Formby), J Curtis (Eastcote), D Dowdall (Warrington), A Ferns (Southport, captain), L Hannah (Hounslow), S Osborne (Warrington), D Robins (St Anne's). Substitutes used: P Shipstone (Brooklands), N Stanhope (Warrington).

Umpires: N Gavin and R du Toit (both Northern Counties)

FOR THE RECORD

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

HONOLULU: Aloha Bowl: Washington 51 Michigan State 23.

MONTGOMERY, Alabama: Blue-Grey Classic: Grey 31 Blue 24.

ATHLETICS

CROSS COUNTRY: Couledon: South London Harriers Boxing Day 2.25 miles: 1, S Major 11min 34sec; 2, P Timblick 11:53; 3, A Herren 12:13. Women: 1, S Spencer-Cusick 15:04; 2, C Walker 15:19; 3, C James 15:23.

ROAD RUNNING: Trefach: Country Club 7 miles: 1, R Bretherick (Preseli) 39min 41sec; 2, A Abbott (Farnhelen) 41:19; 3, P Rose (Cardigan) 41:39. Veteran: M Adams (Tar Running and Orienteering Team) 40:42. Over-50: C Evans (Aberystwyth) 45:12. Team: 1, Tar Running and Orienteering Team 34pts; 2, Cardigan 58; 3, Preseli 81. Women: 1, D Philips (Cleddau) 44:21; 2, C Davies (Haverfordwest Triathlon Club) 53:32; 3, J Buck (Cardigan) 55:16. Team: 1, Cleddau 138; 2, Cardigan 179. Veteran: C Howard (Haverfordwest Triathlon Club) 57:49. Witham: Boxing Day 5 miles: 1, P Barr (Chelmsford) 25:31; 2, M Gibbs (Chelmsford) 26:30; 3, S Haynes (Woodford Green) 27:07. Veteran: R Jordan (Ipswich Jaffa) 27:54. Over-50: C Ross (Chelmsford) 30:10. Women: 1, J Newcombe (Shaftesbury Barnet, holder) 28:56; 2, R Schiller (unattached) 31:30; 3, J Smith (Brentwood) 31:46. Veteran: G Pryke (Ipswich Jaffa) 33:18. Over-45: S Macauley (Springfield Striders) 41:16.

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Utah 107 Houston 103; Chicago 90 Miami 80.

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Leicester Riders 108 Leopards 122.

CRICKET

First Test match

Australia v South Africa

MELBOURNE (first day of five; Australia won toss): Australia have scored 206 for four wickets against South Africa

AUSTRALIA: First Innings

M T Elliott c Richardson b Klusener 6
*M A Taylor c Kirsten b McMillan 20
G S Blewett st Richardson b Symcox 26
M E Waugh c Richardson b Donald 0
S R Waugh not out 87
R T Ponting not out 56
Extras (b 1, lb 5, nb 5) 11
Total (4 wkts) 206

†I A Healy, P R Reiffel, S K Warne, M S Kasprowicz and G D McGrath to bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-18, 2-42, 3-44, 4-77.

BOWLING: Donald 17-5-35-1; Pollock 21-5-56-0; Klusener 15-3-28-1; McMillan 10-3-19-1; Symcox 19-3-45-1; Kallis 4-2-5-0; Cronje 4-2-11-0.

SOUTH AFRICA: G Kirsten, A M Bacher, J H Kallis, D J Cullinan, *W J Cronje, B M McMillan, S M Pollock, L Klusener, †D J Richardson, P L Symcox, A A Donald.

Umpires: S A Bucknor (West Indies) and S G Randell (Australia).

Match referee: R Madugalle (Sri Lanka).

CYCLING

CYCLO-CROSS: Coventry RC (Kenilworth Common, 10 miles): 1, C Sturgeon (Team Orange) 1hr 4min 50sec; 2, S Knight (Peugeot 406) at 1:34; 3, D Atkins (Coventry RC) at 2:04. Middridge CRT (Gateshead International Stadium, 10 miles): 1, J Bushby (KHS) 48min 2sec; 2, S Noble (Stockton Wheelers) at 34sec; 3, P Wood (Wansbeck CC) at 1min 50sec. Crabwood CC (Southampton Sports Centre, 11 miles): 1, S Bowers (Dorset Rough Riders) 1hr 2min 15sec; 2, A Butt (Hargroves-Trant) same time; 3, A MacDonald GA Cycles) at 1:37.

TIME-TRIALS: Shirley RC (Wythall, 10 miles): 1, R Minovi (Warwickshire RC) 22:38; 2, M Ward (Wyre Forest CRC) 22:48; 3, N Walford (CC Eclipse) 23:21. Team: CC Eclipse 1hr 14:28sec. New Forest CC (Ringwood, 10 miles): 1, A Green (New Forest CC) 22min 48sec; 2, G Longland (Radford Accountants) 23:04; 3, M Doe (34 Nomads CC) 23:23. Team: New Forest CC 1hr 14min 27sec. Essex RCC (Hanningfield, 10 miles): 1, F Wright (Team Clean) 26min 39sec; 2, S Tillman (Essex RCC) 27:33; 3, W Thomas (Essex RCC) 27:59.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Club matches

Featherstone	18	Wakefield	12
Leeds	32	Halifax	14
Wigan	46	St Helens	2

RUGBY UNION

Allied Dunbar Premiership

First division

Saracens 21 Leicester 22

Saracens: Tries: Constable, R Wallace. Con: Lynagh. Pens: Lynagh 2. Dropped goal: Lynagh. Leicester: Try: van Heerden. Con: Stransky. Pens: Stransky 4. Dropped goal: Stransky. Att: 14,291.

Welsh League

First division

Blackwood 10 Caerphilly 62

Blackwood: Try: Johnston. Con: Lay. Pen: Lay. Caerphilly: Tries: C Brown 3, I Phillips 2, Bidgood, Bray, Davey, Savastano, penalty try. Cons: Davey 6.

Club match

Hartlepool R 13 West Hartlepool 7

TENNIS

MIAMI BEACH, Florida: Orange Bowl tournament: Boys: Under-18: Fourth round: T Messmer (Ger) bt Homa (Peru) 7-6, 3-6, 7-5; Wei-Jeng Cheng (Taiwan) bt D Grgic (Cro) 4-6, 7-5, 7-6; N Massu (Chile) bt V Sanon (Ivory Coast) 7-5, 6-3; K Ziv (Isr) bt K Ivanov-Smolenski (Russ) 6-2, 4-6, 6-4; R Reiss (US) bt M Kratochvil (Switz) 6-4, 6-4; L Uebel (Ger) bt G Platel (Sp) 6-4, 6-2; J Levinsky (Cz) bt P Canovas (Sp) 6-4, 6-4; P Arquez (Arg) bt J Jeanpierre (Fr) 6-1, 6-1. Under-16: Quarter-finals: F Lopez (Sp) bt B Bachert (Ger) 6-2, 6-7, 6-4; J de Armas (Ven) bt A Fasching (Austria) 3-6, 6-2 ret; I Kunitsin (Russ) bt S Berke (US) 6-3, 6-2; G Coria (Arg) bt M Polesnig (Austria) 7-6, 3-6, 6-3. Girls: Under-18: Third round: C Black (Zim) bt J Lehnhoff (US) 6-3, 6-4; I Visic (Cro) bt T Poutchek (Bela) 6-2, 7-5; T Pisnik (Slovenia) bt K Clijsters (Bel) 6-0, 7-5; D Krstulovic (Cro) bt L Andriyani (Indo) 6-4, 6-1; G Volekova (Slovakia) bt I Selyutina (Kaz) 6-3, 6-0; M Midleton (US) bt M Sequera-Perez (Ven) 1-6, 6-4; E Dementieva (Russ) bt S Urickova (Slovakia) 6-3, 6-4; J Kostanic (Cro) bt Z Gubacsi (Hun) 6-2, 6-1. Under-16: Quarter-finals: L Dominguez (Sp) bt A Timotic (Yug) 3-6, 6-1, 6-3; Li Na (China) bt L Bao (Switz) 6-7, 6-0, 6-0; S Shoeitel (Fr) bt M Burs (Ger) 7-6, 6-3; L Sanchez (Fr) bt A Cargi (US) 7-5, 5-7, 6-4

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The rush hour is always with us

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Cinderella takes to four wheels

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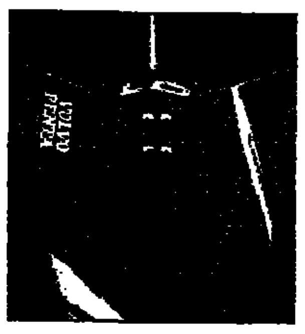
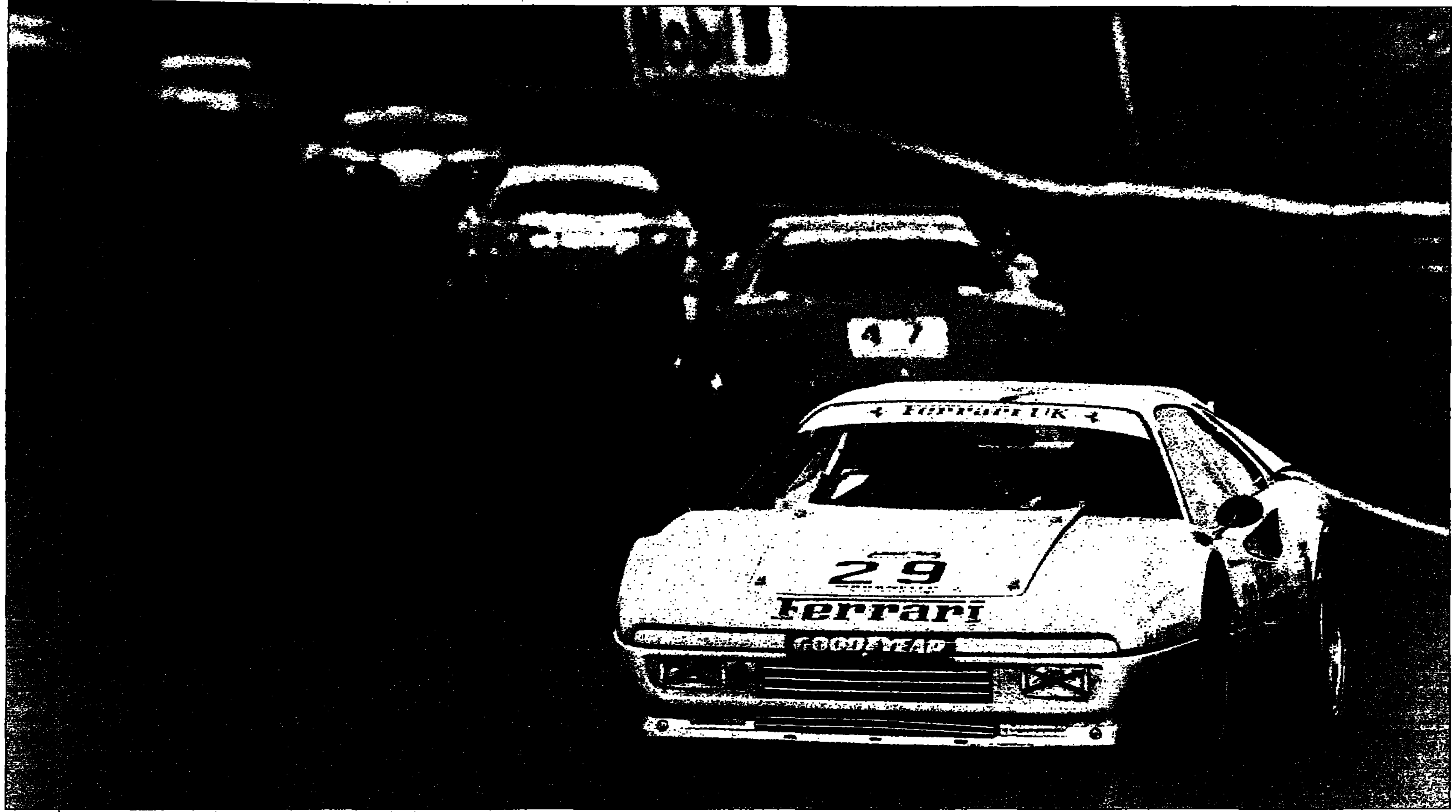


Racing a boat fit for Bond

Next week

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27 1997

A winner made from spare parts



Paul rdiello leads the field in one of the Maranello Ferrari Challenge races: "I think you have to be part of the car. It's all very well tuning the car and the suspension, but unless you are in tune with it yourself, there's no point"

Paul Ciardiello dreamt of having a Ferrari — so he built one for himself. **Vaughan Freeman** reports

For the Teletubbies ar the Spice Girls. We talking serious C stmas "number ones". An g keen drivers of a certain ; there's one wish that gets more letters to Santa C s than anything else: All nt for Christmas is a Ferra

But if u read *Go* two weeks ag u'd know that not even Ala n's Genie could deliver su a gift. If you want a new *Fe ri in this country* the waiti list is at least two years, ev f you have got the £95,000-p required to foot the bill.

Of cou you could buy a second-h one, but then if you real ant a Ferrari for your gar and can afford it, you'll ex t it to meet your exact req ements.

A two- r wait just wasn't good ugh for Paul Ciardiell A car with the prancing orse badge had been on Christmas list for two dec s. So when the Genie r ed "Oh no you can't", h as ready with an "Oh yes in."

What id was to build a Ferrari m spare parts. Now in r put together by himself, sed around the bent cha s of a crash-damaged ari, 38-year-old Ciardiell as defied the odds and bea all comers by winning is year's Maranello Fe i Challenge race series.

His ex ordinary 328GTB has als een voted Best Prepared r in the 12-race series; an olade that puts it on a pa with any factory produced del. Only its startling yell colour marks it out from e traditional red competiti

This ye awards come on top of Cia ello's success last year whe his first competitive seaso is efforts with the car won m the Ferrari Driver of Year title.

His m ne is far more than a D racer. It is the culminati f a life-long motoring d m that started when, a schoolboy, he bought h rst car, a Ford Anglia, f 15. Three years later, usi cash from part-time jobs, was back in the market, a ought an S-Type Jaguar fo 00.

But it s a Ferrari on which he t his sights and nothing e ould do. Somehow the c from Maranello exercise a cination like no *other marque, the tifosi* are in evidence at every grand prix, and, regardless of where they come from, their passion is extreme.

Paul Ciardiello had been touched by the magic that has kept one badge — and only one badge — in the top flight of racing since 1947. No fairy tale could be more appropriate than his in the year that the cars that bear the prancing horse badge notched up 50 years.

"I used to be one of those kids that stood on the side of the road with my mouth open whenever I saw a Ferrari go by," he says. "I have spent 25 years building my business up so that I could afford to go motor racing, and the success of the business has allowed me to be able to race a Ferrari, even if it is rather late in life."

On his way to the coveted titles this season, Ciardiello and his 328GTB also notched up five class lap records at tracks including Donington, Snetterton, Silverstone and, the one he most cherishes, the Formula One Spa Francorchamps track.

The aptly nicknamed "Yellow Peril" Ferrari started life as a crash victim, not surprisingly since the business Ciardiello had worked so hard building up was Maidenhead-based Accident Repair Technicians, which specialises in repairing damaged cars. He saw the potential of the Ferrari wreckage, salvaged the chassis and began to work on straightening it out.

Years of Ferrari mania, and a career in motor engineering, had resulted in Ciardiello building his own private collection of spare parts. These were recruited to start creating the car and uprate the basic Ferrari engine and chassis with modified cylinder heads and camshafts, an exhaust system designed by a friend in Formula One, and an own-design petrol tank. Determined to save weight, he then began creating his own glass-fibre body, using a 328 body mould. Hand-crafted aluminium body parts were added, ensuring all the while that the car conformed completely to race regulations.

His Ferrari diet was so successful that the car is now handicapped, horse-race style, with 140kilos of metal strapped to the bottom during races.

"I knew we could save only tenths of a second with the engine, but by working on the handling, brakes and suspension, and keeping the car light, we can save much more time," he says.

"We straightened the chassis and put a rollcage on it, and have spent a lot of time on how it handles and making the brakes and tyres work. It has cost a hell of a lot of man hours."

Now the years he *spent building up* his business are beginning to pay off. He owns five Ferraris, including a new 355 Spider and a brace of 328GTs. "Perhaps it's because my parents were Italian," he says.

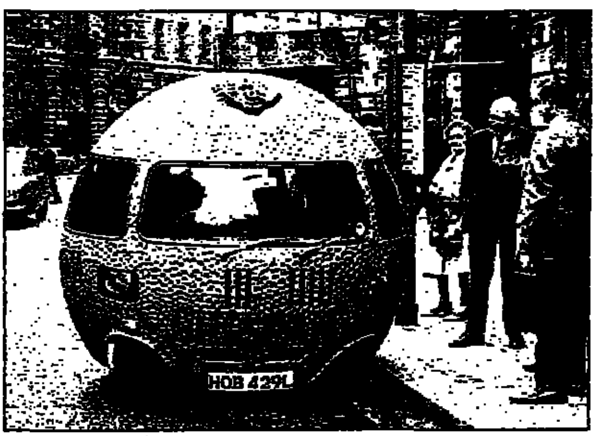
The ultimate thrill came at the Belgian Spa circuit: "It was great to pass the chequered flag at Spa. I had never been there before, and that was the most gratifying win, as well as taking the lap record, and not by a few tenths of a second but by a huge amount."

Having a good car is one thing. But rivals have been impressed by the way Ciardiello, who only started racing last year, has been able to beat competitors such as 500bhp F40s, with his 320bhp car, and drivers with far more experience than his two seasons.

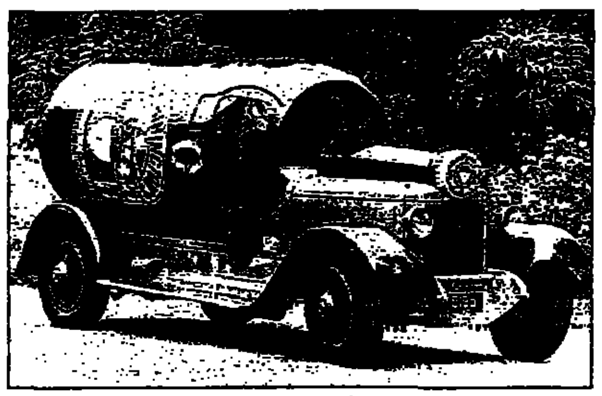
He says: "I cannot explain how I drive. I just get in and go. I think you have to be part of the car when you drive. You have to feel one with the *machine, the two of you working together. It's* all very well tuning the car and the suspension, but unless you are in tune with it yourself, there's no point."

But after 25 years of hard working and longing, perhaps it's no surprise that Ciardiello is so in tune with the Ferrari that happens to come from Maidenhead rather than Maranello.

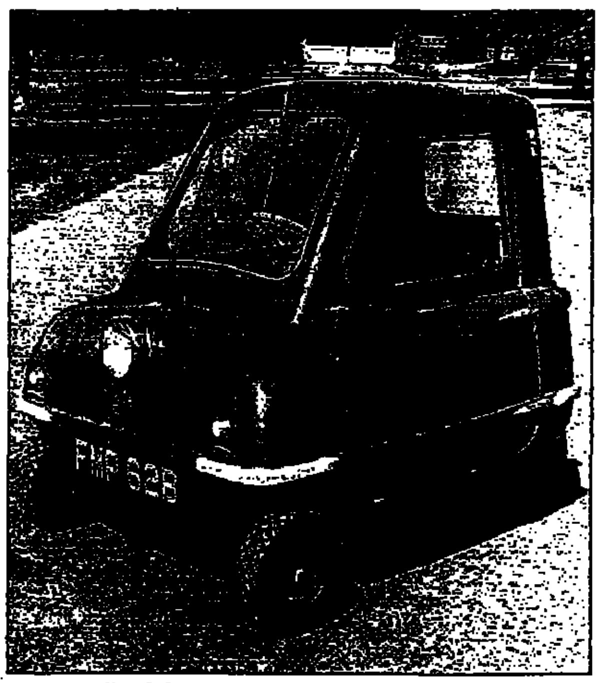
Real cars that looked just like toys



Outspan Orange: an alarming tendency to roll over



Daimler Bottle: its radiator echoed a crown stopper



Manx Peel: better in a museum than on the road

What could go in a Beaulieu Christmas stocking?

Lord Montagu considers some novel possibilities

Some cars are classics, some become legends, others are disasters … and some are novelties. And from the odder items in the Beaulieu collection, we could provide fillers for the larger size of Christmas stocking, starting with a bottle of beer.

The 1924 Daimler Bottle at Beaulieu is a rare survivor of a fleet that promoted Bass & Worthington Breweries in the days when enterprising companies had special advertising vans built in the shape of their products.

Beaulieu's Bottle entered the collection in 1958 after promoting Worthington *White Shield pale ale for* more than three decades. The idea originated before the First World War, when the manager of Worthington, a Dutchman, had a round-radiatored Spyker car (Holland's leading marque) turned into a bottle van. But Spyker abandoned the circular radiator after the Armistice, so when the brewers needed more bottle vans, a new source of chassis was sought. Daimlers were chosen because the traditional fluting on the radiator ech*oed the shape of the crown* stopper on the bottle's neck.

The Daimler has a Bedford truck engine, fitted after the Second World War to replace the original sleeve-valve power unit. Though this displaces only three litres against the five of the Daimler sleeve-valve, it produces more than adequate power to propel the not insubstantial weight of the sheet-iron bottle bodywork along. But it is hard work; steering is heavy and lacks *even the empirical "servo*-assist" of a lead-filled steering wheel rim used on some Daimlers in those pre-power steering days.

The four-speed gearbox is filled with heavy-grade oil that takes a long time to warm up and it is difficult to engage the unsynchronised gears without embarrassing crunching sounds. Idiosyncratic features include a push-on handbrake working on a transmission drum and a central throttle pedal that looks like an aluminium girder and disappears into a slot on the floor when you tread on it.

Next out of the stocking was the Outspan Orange, one of six built in the 1970s to promote the South African fruit producers. It uses the powertrain of a 998cc Mini with automatic transmission in a spaceframe chassis with a wheelbase of only 4ft — the same as its track — over which is fitted the spherical *glass-fibre body, fitted* with orange-tinted windows and trimmed inside with segmented orange leather.

Like the biblical Holy City, its length, breadth and height are approximately equal at 7ft 6ins, which, coupled to that ultrashort wheelbase, makes for somewhat unsettling handling characteristics. I am told there are 200lbs of ballast built into the rear of the chassis to prevent the orange from rolling forward under hard braking.

When we were given the Orange in 1981 we were told it had been tested on London Transport's double-decker tilting rig and remained stable up to the rig's 39 degree limit. That, of course, was a static test; under power it feels alarmingly unstable, and I take with a very large pinch of salt the claim of another Orange owner that he has driven at a steady 70mph on a motorway.

The entrance is at the rear, *the driver sits centrally, right* foot horizontally forward down a tunnel beneath the dashboard with the throttle and brake pedals at its far end, while his left foot rests on the floor, poised to make a quick exit if the Orange starts to roll over …

And after the Orange … a little Peel! The Peel three-wheeler, apart from being the only make of car to come from the Isle of Man, is almost certainly the smallest ever marketed, only 4ft 5ins long, 3ft 3ins wide and 3ft 10ins high, and weighs just 130lbs, making it lighter than most drivers. It has only one seat — which looks suspiciously like a cut-down tubular office chair — and no reverse gear. Instead, a handle on the rear allows the driver to lift the tail and wheel *it* into the tiniest of parking spaces.

The bodywork is a glass fibre moulding, fin*ished inside in that* utilitarian grey spatter-finish paint normally reserved for the grimmer kind of public buildings, and a bulge down the right of the cabin conceals the 49cc DKW two-stroke engine, which is started by sharply pulling up a lever on the floor.

Not only is there no sound insulation, but a hole in the engine cowling allows the choke lever to poke through, so the high-pitched rasp of the power unit is always evident. A crude quadrant of *the steering column support* bracket is vaguely linked to the three-speed transmission, but you need lots of throttle and clutch slip to overcome the engine's minimal power output when moving away from the rest.

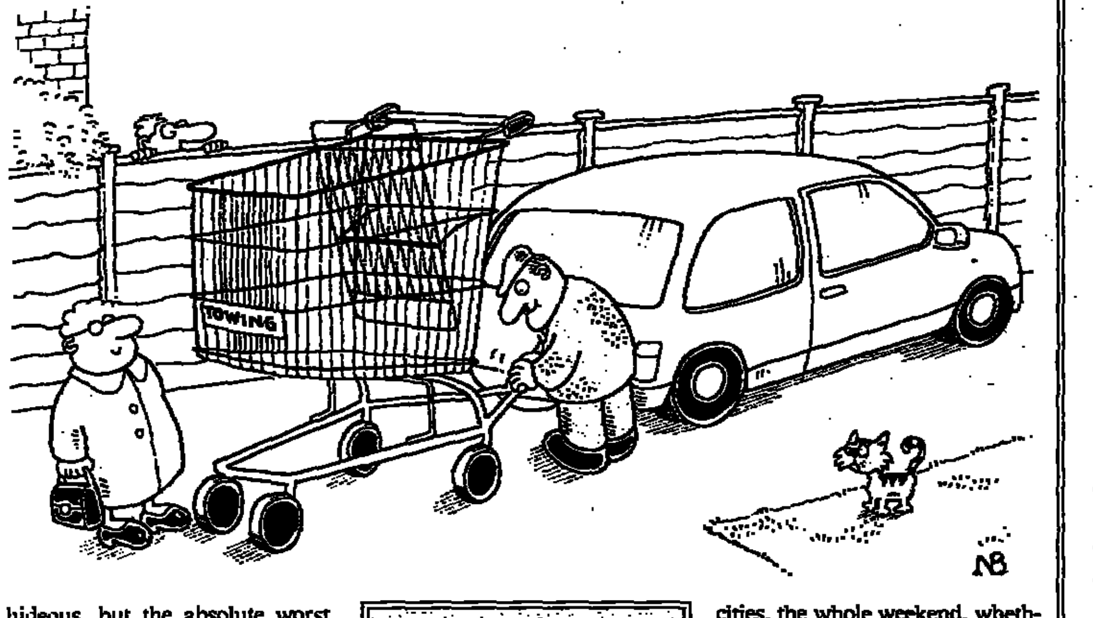
Its makers claimed the Peel had been "tested rigorously over the Isle of Man TT course … [and] the handling is comparable to a normal car", but that is surely wishful thinking. The little red runabout has tiny kart *wheels with knobbly tyres* and feels decidedly unstable long before you reach its top speed of around 35mph.

It only cost £199 new, was cheap to run and bridged the gap between moped and bubble car, but I can't help thinking it is far better off in a museum than it ever was on the road.

هكذا من الأصل

This weekend, like any other time of the year, is simply an extension of weekdays

Just when you thought it was a good car day . . .



By this time in the holiday cycle just about the last thing you want to read is another headache-inducing bleat from me about the state of the toilets at the Rip-Off Services on the M1 or a why-oh-why epic demanding changes to the tax structure relating to fuel oils and . . . there you are, you've nodded off already.

The Christmas-New Year spell is a strange hiatus in our lives, a time when we feel terribly worthy if we have to go to work. A friend of mine who used to be a senior figure in the insurance industry knew that it was time to take early retirement when his ultimate boss rang him while he was eating lunch on Christmas Day to ask a question that could have been asked on any day of the year. When my friend told this nuisance caller that he was surprised to be called at home and asked about work on Christmas Day, his boss replied: "Well I'm working, so why shouldn't you?"

On the other hand, it is somewhat odd that a dynamic economy in which millions of people work long hours can apparently afford to close down altogether for a week — or, in some sectors, two weeks — at Christmas. But at least this gives us a bit more road surface than we are used to having, which is why people who travel to work at this time of year tend to do so by car, even if they normally take the train.

Yet some research that reached the newspapers just as Christmas was getting started showed that today may not be the best day to test the theory that driving is the best way to travel over Christmas. It is certainly easy on Christmas Day, which I spent driving back and forth for a family lunch in Devon, but Saturdays are a very different matter.

This week's research showed that there has been a shift in the peak time for traffic on our urban roads. Weekday mornings are still hideous, but the absolute worst traffic nightmare occurs between 11am and noon on a Saturday morning.

The reason has much to do with changing leisure habits and our increasing wealth, thus making both shopping and leisure activities part of the panoply of traffic-inducing factors.

Today could provide an interesting test of this theory. There ought to be less traffic on the roads than a normal Saturday because many people, including university and school students, are away on holiday. But other factors weigh in the opposite direction. People travelling to watch or take part in sports events now contribute hugely to the volume of traffic on our roads at weekends.

The other factor with a particular application today is the January sales. Yes, I know what month it is, but for reasons unclear to me the January sales now start on Boxing Day. Indeed, one of the most depressing sights on Christmas Eve is harassed shop workers at the end of a long day being obliged to put up sales stickers in the windows of stores, announcing that the item you bought as a Christmas present 10 minutes ago will cost half as much in 48 hours. Thanks a bunch, Mr High Street.

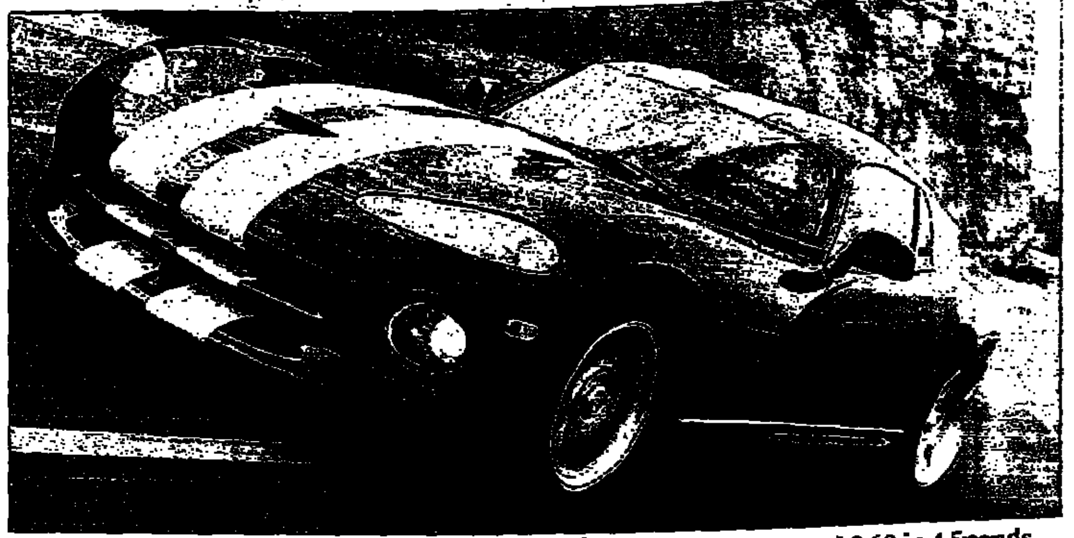
DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard

These huge changes to our lives have meant that the days have gone when motorists could, for the sheer pleasure of it, cruise the sights of London and other large cities on Boxing Day. Sunday trading and the expansion of Sunday sport has meant that in cities, the whole weekend, whether at Christmas or other times of the year, is now simply an extension of weekdays. I am all for shops being open every day, but it has to be admitted that the trend has cost us something: there is no longer a day that is different to all other days.

Every problem has a solution and this one is no different. The answer, as is so often the case, is in our hands. For example, the answer to the lunacy of the January sales that started yesterday is for us to stay away. If we do not wish to travel in a crush of people every day of the week, the withdrawal of our custom will soon ensure that our wish is granted because retailers will have to behave differently if their customers refuse to play ball.

Unfortunately, a sea change in our cities requires a sea change in customer attitudes and it has to happen among a large number of customers more or less simultaneously. So are there any volunteers out there to start the ball rolling?



Dodge Viper GTS coupé: race-bred handling, towering torque figures and 0-60 in 4.5-conds

Dodge Ram: the world's biggest pick-up and finger-light steering

Cinders burns rubber

Stuart Birch enters the Magic Kingdom

The Ugly Sisters were all of a twitter. They had been invited to the Prince's Christmas ball — and just knew he would marry one of them. "Great! Cinderella can drive us. We'll take the Dodge Ram pick-up; she can wait in the car park. That Ram is so macho, no one will even look at her.

So, on the great night, they set off, Cinders behind the wheel of the monster — the world's biggest pick-up — with its wonderful growly, 8-litre V10 engine. She zipped through the gears from 0-60mph in just 8.5 seconds and (this being the Magic Kingdom and free of speed limits) soon reached a maximum of 112mph. At the palace they shooed her away to await their return.

Disconsolately, she twirled the finger-light steering, the Ram's quadruple rear wheels leaving tracks in the lightly falling snow as she drove tearfully into the car park away from the brightly-lit palace.

But suddenly the Ram's giant 97in x 64in load deck glowed and she saw in her mirror a beautiful fairy who knocked on the cab roof with her wand and yelled: "Cinderella, you will go to the ball!"

In a trice the chunky Ram, on sale in the Magic but not in the United Kingdom, was turned into an exotic Chrysler Viper GTS Coupé ("they share the same V10 engine, Cinders, but you get more power at 400bhp instead of 300") and Cinders's threadbare dungarees became an elegant ball gown.

"Get the pedal to the metal, Cinders, and have a ba' said the Good Fairy. "But rember this optional extra pack isnly good until midnight."

Cinders gunned tl throttle, swept up to the front oie palace, stopped by the val, parking, ordered the car back foust before 12 and entered the balkt 11.55, as the blue Viper with vite stripes was returned to the frc door, she emerged with the prin

"Can't waste time vh all that glass slipper stuff," s said, settling into the hip-hugig driver's seat. "It's 0-60mph in5 seconds, 170mph top speed, grt handling and really makes youyes water. We're out of here bef: the clock strikes. We're history.

The cacophonous snd of the V10 blasted into the tht. In just five minutes Cinderdrifted the Viper through bends, ploiting its race-bred handling, : towering torque figures, racinfor happiness. She was well ouf range by the time the clock stad to chime midnight.

VIPER G3

Engine: Eight-cylinc V10 producing 378blat 5,100rpm (poor Ram-ts only 300).

Transmission: Six-spd manual, rear drive tlugh massive 13x17in whe

Performance: 0-60m in 4.5 seconds, 0-100 in 9 seconds and on to 174ph.

Economy: Not a stro point. Average 14mpgp to 19mpg in motorwa cruising.

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95 (M)	A6 2.6 SE Auto Quartz grey, climate	£15,995
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95 (M)	A4 2.6 SE Panther black, acc, alloys	£14,995
95 (M)	A6 2.8 quattro Quartz grey, lthr, climate, e/s	£13,995
94 (M)	80 2.6 E Auto Estate Amazon, esr, r/r, ew, alloys	£13,495
93 (L)	80 2.6 SE Estate Emerald green, esr, ew, alloys	£12,995
92 (J)	S2 Coupe Indigo, air con, lthr, esk	£11,995
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95 (M)	Coupe 2.0 16V Ruby red, alloys, abs, e/w	£11,995
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97P	C180 Eleg Auto Azurite, air con	12T	£22,995
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95M	C200 Eleg Auto Malachite green, black cloth	21T	£19,995
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97P	C200 Eleg Auto Azurite Blue, grey cloth, air con	15T	£23,995
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SL280 94L Pearl Blue/Mushroom leather, 8 Hole Alloys, R Seats, R/S, 1 Owner, Stunning! 15,000 miles £40,000 Sytner Direct 0115 924 1144

SL280 94L Pearl Blue/Mushroom leather, 8 Hole Alloys, R Seats, R/S, 1 Owner, Stunning! 15,000 miles £40,000 Sytner Direct 0115 924 1144

SL500 Nov '90, 26,000 mls from new, FMBSH, blue/black, immaculate condition. £33,000. Tel:(01246) 569 637 (H)/ 450608 (W).

S500L, 95M 44k One owner FSH High spec Immaculate. Silver/Grey lthr. £37,250. 01202 290534/0802 588599.

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97P	E50 AMG LHD Brilliant Silver, Very High Spec	6T	£54,995
96P	SLK 230 Brilliant Silver/Black Lthr, A/C	6T	£POA
97P	C180 Esprit Auto Green Black/Multi Green Cloth, Front Armrest, Front EW	12T	£18,495
96N	C180 Elegance Auto Ruby Red/Mushroom Cloth, EW, ESR, Walnut Trim, ABS	21T	£19,750
96P	C180 Elegance Auto B/Silver/Grey Cloth	9T	£22,995
94M	C200 Eleg Auto Azurite Blue/Grey Cloth, Elec Windows, ESR, Walnut Trim	33T	£18,950
93K	190E 1.8 LE Auto Azurite Blue/Grey Cloth, ESR, EW, Walnut, Alloys	31T	£13,995
93K	220E Malachite/Cream Cloth, ESR, Walnut Wood	41T	£18,995
97P	230 Elegance Auto B/Silver/Grey Cloth, Air Con	12T	£25,995
93K	200 Est Auto Blue/Grey Lthr, Air Con, 7 Seats	59T	£18,995
95M	E220 Est Auto Brill Silver/Grey Cloth, ESR, E/Windows, FCAR, Walnut, 7 Sts	30T	£25,495
97P	E230 Elegance Est Auto Green Black/Grey Cloth, Air Con, 7 Seats	12T	£32,495
96N	E230 Elegance Auto White/Blue Cloth, A/C, W/W	14T	£27,995
93L	E280 Est Auto Smoke Silver/Grey Cloth, A/C, 7 Seats, Alloys	44T	£23,995
95M	E300 Est Auto Malachite/Mush Lthr, A/C, Elec D/Seat, Alloys	47T	£27,995
95M	E320 Est A Tourmaline/Mush Lthr, 7 Seats, A/C, Elec Seats	32T	£28,995
94L	SL280 Auto Blue Black/Mush Hide, Elec Seats, 8 Hole Alloy Wheels	31T	£39,850
97P	V230 Trend Manual Brilliant Silver/Grey Velour, 7 Seats, Cruise, Twin Sunroofs	11T	£18,995

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Example: 96N C180 Sport
Cash Price: £18,995 Deposit: £3,000
36M @ £299.00
GFV £9,228.76 (12,000 MPA)
APR 11.18%

96N	C180 Sport	£18,995
96P	C180 Elegance	£20,995
94M	C200 Elegance	£19,995
97P	C200 Sport	£23,995
97P	C200 Elegance	£23,995
95M	C220 Elegance	£20,995
97P	C280 Sport	£27,995

Example: 96P E200 Classic
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APR 11.36%

96P	E200 Classic	£22,495
96P	E200 Classic	£22,995
96P	E230 Elegance	£29,995
96N	E320 Coupe	£31,995
96N	E200 Estate	£23,995
97P	E200 Classic	£23,995
93L	E220 Estate	£20,995

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هكذا من الأصل

Equities lower after late sell-off

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
584	407½	Allied Domecq	510	- 1	4.3	13.1
636	382	Guinness (NP)	390	..	4.2	17.9
75½	40½	Gum Stewart	41½		10.2	14.5
679½	424	Diageo	558	- 1	3.3	17.0
1040	847	Glenmorangie 'A'	850		2.0	20.6
580	290	Highland Distill	290	- 1	3.8	13.4
436	165	Matthew Clark	166½	- 1	15.5	5.2
109½	47½	Macallan G	51½	- 2	7.9	
2009¾	1368¾	SA Breweries	1459¾	- 8½	2.5	

BANKS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1521½	818½	ABN-AMRO	1175	- 19½	2.7	17.0
1260	710	Abbey Nat	1070	- 1	3.2	17.5
855	532½	Alliance & Leic	790	- 12	2.6	18.7
606	398½	Allied Irish	590½	+ 2	3.2	16.5
516½	363½	Aus New Z	378½	- 6	5.1	
4953¼	2375	Bank America	4250	- 77½		
606	331½	Bank Scotland	550	- 15	2.6	15.2
1800	971½	Barclays	1589	- 25	2.6	15.1
821½	517½	Bk of Ireland	886	- 7	2.1	19.4
9959¼	6006¼	Citicorp	7363½	- 166½		
1759¼	1268½	Commerzbk	1637½		2.8	
852½	329½	Dai Ichi Kan	329½	16½	1.2	69.6
4537	2709¾	Deutsche Bk	4157½		1.5	
1300	759½	Espirito Santo	1168½		3.1	
947½	139	Fuji Bank	218½	- 20½	1.9	43.0
1353½	1372½	HSBC	1510	- 15	3.9	12.2
2258½	1226	HSBC Hk	1445	- 6	4.0	11.7
793	507	Halifax	750	- 15	3.4	25.5
645	483½	Irish Perm	635		2.4	17.6
860½	424	Lloyds TSB	746	- 13	2.4	21.3
1008	669½	Nat Aust Bk	804½	- 6½	4.7	
1081	663½	Nat West	995	- 16	3.6	15.[illegible]
590½	349	Northern Rock	580½	- 2½	1.9	22.9
790	508	Royal Bk Scot	784	- 11	3.6	14.6
1093½	562½	Stand Chart	652	- 7	3.0	11.4
£164¼	£164¼	Wells Fargo	£164¼		1.9	
403¼	315½	Westpac	370	- ½	2.[illegible]	
373½	267½	Woolwich	315	- 10	3.1	19.7

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
971½	695	Bass	905½	- 9½	2.9	16.3
68½	42½	Bar Ex the Bd	54½	- ½	4.3	16.7
205	132½	Brainmed Brs	152½		5.9	13.1
155½	121½	City Centre Rest	135		2.2	21.0
769½	575½	Compass Gp	723	- 1	1.7	24.5
306	250	Eldridge P A	269½		2.7	
266½	221	Enterprise Inns	238½		3.8	
395	412	Folk Sm A I	42½		3.7	13.7
366	310	Greenalls Grp	432½	+ ½	4.9	10.6
770	610	Greene King	732½	+ 4½	2.9	15.0
232½	152½	Grosvenor Inns	197½		4.0	20.6
293½	218½	Groucho Chez Go	281½		1.4	22.7
298½	213½	Hardy Hanson	239	- ½	6.4	
2950	2075	Holt J	2125		3.5	11.9
78	56	Inn Business	62	- ½	3.7	10.2
357	293	Mansfield	302½	- 1½	3.3	12.5
315½	252	Marston Thmpt	267		3.9	9.5
615	440	Morland	445		3.7	
293½	210	Old Eng Pub	268½	+ 1	1.0	22.8
47½	18½	Parachord	30½			

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
492½	327½	Antofagasta	330		2.0	16.9
358	232	Asset Hldgs	349		2.6	10.9
917	509	Broken Hill	550½	- 2½	3.6	15.3
289	174	BTR	150		6.1	6.3
626	462	BAT	537	- 7	6.1	13.3
60½	41	Brierley Inv	42½	+ ¼	11.1	7.0
266	183	Cowcon	195	- 1	5.1	12.3
240½	197½	Cosalt	234½		6.0	9.3
415	255½	DCC	414		2.4	15.4
351	243½	Galliher	331½	- 2½	7.3	10.3
140½	101½	Hanson Credit	134	- ½	8.2	15.0
667½	339½	Hutch Whamp	361¼	- ½	3.2	22.3
459½	381	Imperial Tob	381½	- 5	7.0	9.4

Column continued from the foot of the first column (no heading on this page):

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
680	533	Bunzl	580½		3.5	14.0
17	10½	Budgens Gpt	11½		2.2	52.5
119½	94½	Cox Fittings	95		5.9	7.6
360	200	Caffyns	342		4.8	7.9
225	162½	Car Group	189½	- 1	3.1	17.6
172½	117½	Cawdale	138	+ 3	3.4	8.0
100	61½	Charles Sidney	87½		4.5	12.5
53½	42	Cook (DC)	43½		7.1	6.1
121	90½	Dag Motors	98½		10.4	6.3
134½	102½	Dennmans El	105½		3.3	9.7
400	215	Diploma	223½	- 1	8.1	9.1
502½	387½	Electrocomponts	449	- 4	2.3	24.3
226½	117½	Eurodis Elec	152½		4.2	28.8
105	78½	European Mtrt	94		7.8	7.3
320	212	Evans Halshaw	290		7.1	
55½	39½	Fife Indmat	45½	..	9.3	7.4
397½	275	Finelist Grp	354½		2.7	15.7
34½	13½	Gardiner	21½		5.5	7.9
73½	57½	Glencherton	67½	...	2.8	11.0
110	82½	Grampian	90		4.3	15.0
15½	11	HR Owen	13½		6.7	9.1
103	20½	Harnlea	22½			21
274	259½	Headlam	327½		2.3	19.8
172	145	Holders Tech	150		5.4	12.2
240½	66½	IGA Ind	68½	+ 1	5.5	5.3
309½	155½	Inchcape	160½		7.6	10.6
72	49½	Jacks (Wm)	57½		5.4	7.4
343½	214½	Kwik-Fit	342½	+ 2½	2.1	18.8
560½	316½	Lex Service	452		4.5	13.6
152	97	Lookers	109		9.3	7.7
9	3½	Meddlesex	5	+ ¼	2.5	12.2
41½	10½	Matchbes	19		3.2	
372	160	Norbain	271		4.0	11.0
233½	114½	Northamber	235½		1.4	16.3
329½	295½	Partco	301		3.4	18.0
304½	254½	Pendragon	266½		4.8	11.7
222½	172½	Perry Gp	178½		6.4	7.9
751	403½	Premier Farnell	415		3.8	15.4
147½	116	Quick Group	120		7.8	8.0
357	295	REA	285		1.8	63.0
2½	1½	Reece	1½			41.8
25	9½	Rentco	11½			
3	1½	Ross Gp	3½			
109½	78½	Rykind	100	- 1½	5.1	9.4
33	24	SEP Ind	28		5.7	
92½	35	Sabre	56		5.9	
415½	168	Tiny Products	171½	+ 1½	9.0	7.1
247	156½	Trust Motor Grpt	156½	- 1	8.0	6.9
408	229	UNIECO	400		1.8	21.2
93½	59	United Chem Gp	88		0.5	19.6
352½	237½	Vardy (Reg)	245		4.0	11.4
685	498½	WF Elect	650		2.9	22.3
41	25½	Wilshaw	40		2.7	10.6
172½	111½	Wylo	146½		2.6	16.3
159½	119½	Young (H)	150		3.9	10.4

ELECTRICITY

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

ENGINEERING

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1333½	897	Siebe	1110	- 2	1.4	19.7
227½	105½	Six Hundred	117½		5.3	8.3
993½	708½	Smiths Indt	830	- 10	2.7	19.5
767	543	Spirax-Sarco	571	...	3.1	14.8
302½	338½	Sterling Ind	283	+ 1	4.8	9.5
698½	430	TI	470	+ 3	3.7	15.0
120½	88½	Tinsley (E)	100		7.9	9.0
120½	67½	TransTec	82½	..	3.7	11.3
273½	144½	Triplex Lloyd	272½		3.3	18.4
378	251½	Ultra Elecr	366		2.2	21.3
77½	48½	Utd Inds	54½		5.7	14.0
273½	169½	Vickers	237½		3.8	14.8
10½	6½	Vitners Grp	7½			
712½	505	Vosel	631½		2.5	12.0
952	742	Vosper Thornyt	805	..	4.2	12.4
350	213½	Wagon Ind	294½	..	5.2	12.8
304½	203½	Weir	255½	+ 1	4.0	12.4
259½	157½	Wellington Hdg	159		6.4	9.2
48½	33	Wellman	48½		3.8	13.6
71½	45½	Wescol	65		2.3	18.6
825	525	Whatman	752½	- 7½	2.3	22.0
65½	30½	Widney	45		10.3	13.3

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
154	97	Adwest	149½		5.6	12.1
197	156	Airflow Streaml	160		8.2	11.5
757	565	Avon Rubbert	622½		3.6	
344	227½	Bostrom	333½		2.7	16.7
140	96	Britax	134½		3.2	17.5
332½	238½	Dennis	313½		3.7	14.3
315½	219½	First Tech	279½		1.6	22.0
1480	907	GKN	1233	- 14	2.6	
4396¼	2327½	General Mtr	3553½	- 18½	3.4	
583½	357	Henlys	401	+ 2½	4.8	9.8
2373¼	1540½	Honda Motor	2146½	+ 41½	0.4	
502	312½	Laird	443½	- 2	3.2	
245	180	LucasVarity	213		2.3	13.6
205	131	Mayflower	177		1.7	25.1
172½	107½	Sylone	126½	- ½	6.5	10.3
257½	123	T & N	251½		4.6	
35½	18	Toad	25	+ ½		

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
580	418	AB Food	535		2.4	17.0
311½	250	Acatos & Hutch	257½	- 1½	5.2	
48½	34	Albert Fisher	38½	- ¼	11.5	9.5
330	275	Banks (S C)	291½		5.1	10.0
450	322	Barr (AG)	417½		3.2	14.9
43	30	Bensons Crsp	34½		4.1	8.6

HEALTHCARE

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

INSURANCE

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
138	82½	J Fry Euro U	138	.	4.9	30.1
72	42	J Fry Utilt	67½	..	10.0	15.8
85	68½	J Fry Util Inc	83½		8.0	...
130	92½	Jupiter Ex Inc	130		8.2	15.2
19	3½	Jupiter Ex IncWt	18½	...		
92	76½	Jupiter Gbl Capt	91		11.0	11.2
44½	31	Jupiter Gbl Pfd	44			...
139½	120½	Jupiter Intl Grn	136½		3.6	
399½	283	Kiwi Chrl	363	- ½	2.0	54.1
118½	84½	Kiwi E Mid	90½	..		
174	153½	Kiwi End	167½			
116	74	Kiwi H Inc	116	..	11.6	11.8
368½	261	Kiwi O'seast	337½	- 2	1.5	65.4
199½	167½	Kiwi Smlr	174	..	2.6	45.5
387	102½	Korea—Euro	131½	..	0.9	61.1
173½	92½	Latin American	113½	- ¼		
1138	502½	Law Debenture	1090	+ 2½	3.2	33.0
122	103½	Lde Oil Opp	116½			
133	109½	Lloyds Sm Cap	127½			
25½	16½	Lloyds Sm Dlr	18½		28.8	4.5
158½	128	Lloyds Sm Prg	148	..	3.8	
179½	159½	Lon St Lawrence	174	..	4.6	27.0
347½	292½	Lowland	342	..	4.2	29.3
805	635	M&G 2nd Dual Cp	795		...	
85	64½	M&G 2nd Dual In	66½			2.2

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
14	0½	Murray Wld Wts	0½	..		
755	603	Monks Inv Tst	684½	- 2	1.8	55.2
185½	158½	Morg Gren Inct	185	+ ½	4.6	25.9
87	59½	Morg Wts	80½	+ 1	...	
100½	68½	Morg Lat Amer	75½		0.5	
40½	37½	Morg Wts	25		...	
130½	116½	Murray Ent	112½	..	3.5	37.8
21½	12½	Murray Ent Wts	13		...	
89	57	Murray Eng Ecn	60½	..	1.1	..
21½	6½	Murray Em Sc Wt	10			
449	364	Murray Incml	437½	- 1	4.1	31.3
501	421½	Murray Intl	432½	- 1	3.9	30.0
205½	192½	Murray S/C DP	205½		..	
291½	263½	Murray S/C Cap	287½			
73½	57½	Murray S/C Inc	61		24.6	4.9
4430	2150	Murray S/C Uts	4362½	- 12½	3.5	

LEISURE & HOTELS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
433½	333	Millennium & Cop	411	..	2.1	17.1
1½	1	Millwall Hldgs	1½	..		
144½	94	Newcastle Utd	94	- 2	2.1	13.7
403½	191½	Northern	393½		1.9	30.7
188½	65	Prism Leisure	65½		13.7	3.3
38	22½	Queensborough	24	..	2.1	10.9
18½	10½	Queens Moat	12½			3.5
458½	278	Rank Grp	338½	+ 1½	6.4	21.0
57½	40½	Ryan Hotels IE	52		4.2	10.9
1600	1157½	Savoy Hotel 'A'	1175	+ 7½	1.9	
111½	39½	Sheffield United	49½	..	..	...
267½	184½	Sinclair (Wm)	225		4.9	11.9
153½	47	Southampton	76		1.6	
118½	93½	Stakis	95	+ ½	3.3	14.2
320	235½	Stanley Leisure	253½	..	2.0	20.7
11	4	Tandem	4½		..	54.3
346	340	Tingong	345		0.8	35.8
210	120½	Thistle Hotels	155½	- ½	3.0	14.5
142	74½	Tottenham Hot	78½		1.6	10.4
133	94	Vardon	132½	+ ½	2.1	15.7
417	265½	Wembley	296½	+ 1	1.3	68.4
151½	89½	Zetters Gp	150½	+ 2	9.1	9.2

MEDIA

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
590	447½	Capital Radio	482½	- 2½	3.6	15.0
577½	435	Carlton Comm	459		3.5	12.7
812½	512½	Chrysalis	600	...	0.6	
95½	69	City of Lon	84½	...	9.1	10.9
112½	100	Conflant Comms	100	- ½	1.5	11.9
174	134½	Creation Pub	144	...	6.1	51.0
2050	1431½	Daily Mail	2050	...	1.4	33.8
1965¾	1331½	Daily Mail 'A'	1965¾		1.5	23.0
216½	138½	Dialog	144½	+ 5½	..	
430	195	Dorling Kind	217½		2.6	36.0
908	715½	EMAP	880½		1.9	20.9
705	440	EMI	478	- 7½	3.5	65.6
1122½	841½	Elsevier	979½		2.6	22.6
1840	1400	Euromoney Pbt	1580		4.0	17.4
52½	37	Fitch	52½	...	1.5	12.9
803½	502½	Flextech	528½	+ 1	...	

MINING

OIL & GAS

OTHER FINANCIAL

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
403½	299½	Lon Forfaiting	342½	- 3½	4.5	11.2
229½	175½	London Pacific	178½	- 2½	9.8	5.4
111½	85½	Lon Scot Bk	108	..	3.8	18.9
245½	178½	Man ED & Ft	245	+ ½	5.6	9.8
1467½	1097½	M & G	1380	..	3.6	22.3
1710	1172½	MAM	1693	...	3.5	26.8
285½	113½	Paragon	135½	..	1.7	...
3825	2155	Perpetual	2735	+ 72½	2.8	18.4
777	500	Provident	754½		2.9	24.1
400	302	Rathbone Bs	395½	+ 1	4.8	14.0
60½	38½	Rea Brothers	55½		2.2	10.5
84½	44½	Rutland Tst	50	- ¼	3.6	11.0
157½	87	SEC Groupt	87	+ ½	7.3	
445	302	S & U	320	...	7.2	8.4
2045	1370	Schroders	1850	- 40	1.4	18.2
1846	1225	Schroders N/V	1880	- 90	1.6	17.3

PHARMACEUTICALS

PRINTING & PAPER

PROPERTY

RETAILERS, FOOD

RETAILERS, GENERAL

SUPPORT SERVICES

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TEXTILES & APPAREL

TRANSPORT

WATER

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
865	671½	Anglian	805	- 10	5.4	11.[illegible]
290	203	East Surrey	287½		4.8	11.6
970½	749	Hyder	961½	+ ½	5.9	8.1
140¼	101¾	Hyder Cm Pf	120		8.5	
899	532½	Mid Kent Hldgs	852½		5.9	9.9
1050	683	Severn Trent	980	- 15	4.8	10.7
3200	2755	South Staffs	3277½		3.6	12.5
938½	582½	South West	924		5.2	11.7
970	583½	Thames	880½	- 11½	5.1	9.8
843	605½	Utd Utilities	785	- 10	5.3	12.4
520½	344½	Wessex	500	+ ½	4.8	9.5
600¼	325	Yorkshire	465	- ½	5.3	9.1

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
280	84½	Abacus Recruit	280	+ 28	0.7	30.1
217	120	[illegible]	207			
252½	180	Denison Hdgs	220		1.8	25.7
51½	26½	Freepages	32½	- ½	2.7	21.2
98½	63½	Megalomedia	64½			
65	22½	Memory Corp	29½	...	0.4	[illegible]
980	288	[illegible]	378			
1285	732½	[illegible]	840		1.8	
788	619½	[illegible]	742½	+ 1½	0.1	
84½	65½	[illegible]	64½		3.4	[illegible]
80½	16½	[illegible]	17½		3.1	17.6

Source: FT Information

Price at suspension. † Ex dividend. ‡ Ex scrip. ▲ Ex rights issue. ▼ Ex all. § Ex capital distribution. * Figures or report awaited. .. No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index.

BRITISH FUNDS

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
SHORTS (under 5 years)						
119	113	Treas 6¾% 1998	116		3.99	6.86
103	100	Exch 9¾% 1998	100	-	9.74	6.50
101	100	Treas 7¼% 1998	100	..	7.25	7.20
110	102	Treas 14% 1998-01	102	-	13.64	6.89
110	105	Treas 15½% 1998	106	-	14.62	6.99
109	104	Exch 12% 1998	104	-	11.62	7.03
105	102	Treas 9½% 1999	102		9.27	6.94
111	105	Exch 12¼% 1999	106	-	11.53	6.89
108	104	Treas 10½% 1999	104	-	10.02	6.88
99	95	Treas 6% 1999	98		6.07	6.74
109	105	Conv 10¼% 1999	106	-	9.67	6.79
106	103	Conv 9% 2000	104		8.61	6.74
104	102	Treas 8% 2000	103		7.72	6.61
104	102	Treas 8½% 2000	103		8.22	6.63
119	113	Treas 13% 2000	114	-	11.37	6.72
112	98	Treas 10% 2001	109	-	9.15	6.67
101	98	Treas 7% 2001	101	+	6.90	6.56
MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)						
107	98	Treas 7¼% 2007	107	+	6.73	6.19
122	108	Treas 9% 2008	122	+	7.37	6.16
114	101	Treas 8% 2009	114	+	6.87	6.21
100	88	Treas 6¼% 2010	100	+	6.24	6.23
124	109	Conv 9% 2011	124	+	7.20	6.24
126	109	Treas 9% 2012	126	+	7.14	6.25
93	80	Treas 5½% 2008-12	93	+	5.86	6.13
113	98	Treas 7¾% 2012-15	113	+	6.83	6.21
LONGS (over 15 years)						
117	100	Treas 8% 2013	117	+	6.82	6.25
119	101	Treas 8% 2015	119	+	6.70	6.20
128	109	Treas 8¾% 2017	128	+	6.82	6.27
122	107	Tr 8% 2021	122	+	6.53	6.17
UNDATED						
56	43	War Ln 3½%	56	+	6.25	
39	30	Treas 2½%	39	+	6.41	
61	48	Consols 4%	61	+	6.50	

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TIGER SHOOT 40

A slanging match almost led to a global meltdown

BUSINESS

PROBE 43

Weekend Money tests financial Internet sites

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27 1997

Korean shares rally on £6bn IMF aid plan

BY RICHARD MILES

SOUTH KOREAN markets staged a remarkable comeback yesterday, as traders reacted enthusiastically to an agreement by the International Monetary Fund to advance an emergency aid payment of $10 billion (£6 billion).

However, economists believe the recovery may prove shortlived, as the country's ailing industrial groups are forced to pay the price of the bail-out through a wide-ranging restructuring that could lead to the loss of thousands of jobs.

The composite index of shares on the Seoul stock exchange rose 6.74 per cent to close at 375.15, after peaking earlier in the day at 376.84. South Korea's currency, the won, also made a spectacular rally, soaring more than 30 per cent against the US dollar before settling back to finish the day up 22.6 per cent at 1,498.

However, traders gave warning that the package of strict economic reforms promised by Kim Dae Jung, the President-elect, in exchange for the IMF's $60 billion bail-out would lead to further hardship for South Korean companies and their employees.

Mr Kim has agreed to dismantle virtually all restrictions on foreign investment in South Korean financial markets. He has also pledged to keep interest rates high to cap inflation, a bail-out of the leading domestic banks, and tough labour market reforms.

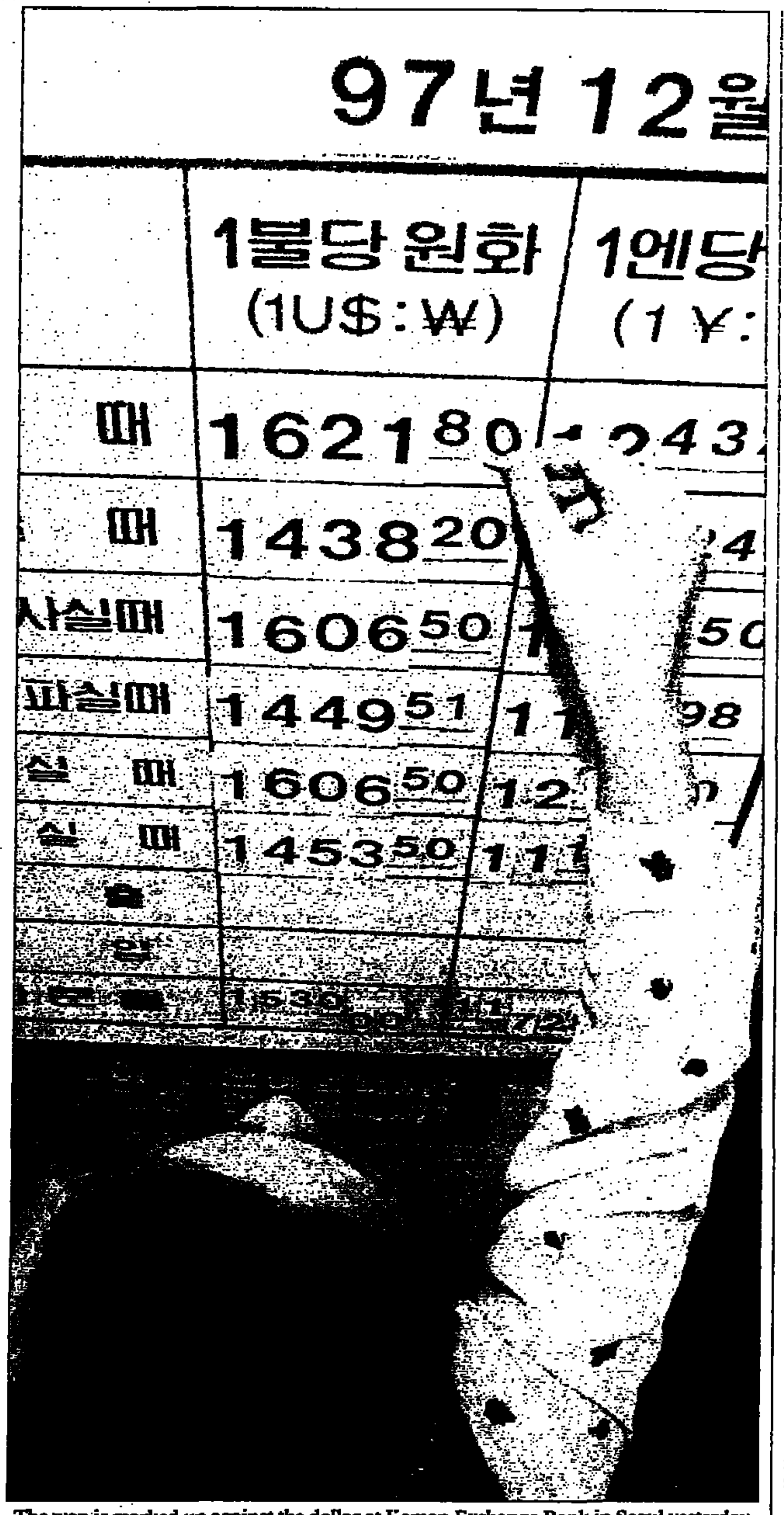
In return, the IMF said it would advance $10 billion of aid to the country in two stages: $2 billion immediately and $8 billion in the new year. This comes on top of a $3 billion stabilisation loan, agreed by the World Bank earlier this week.

Thirteen leading nations are putting up the money for the advance, with the UK contributing $400 million and the US $1.7 billion. But Japan is offering the lion's share, $3.33 billion, a third of the total $10 billion aid it is willing to provide to South Korea.

"We will immediately and earnestly discuss market-oriented measures to assure the best solution, while keeping close contacts with major US and European institutions," a group of ten leading Japanese banks said in a joint statement. Japan's co-operation is vital, as its banks hold a large portion of Seoul's $100 billion in short-term foreign debt.

Continuing worries about the health of Japanese firms pushed Tokyo stocks into freefall yesterday. The 225-share Nikkei average lost 497.5 points, or 3.25 per cent, to finish the day at 14,802.6. Many dealers closed positions early on fears that some small firms *might* go to the wall before the year's end.

Hiroshi Arano, a strategist at Dai Ichi Kangyo Asahi Asset Management, said the market would remain nervous unless the authorities intervened. "To pull the stock market out of the doldrums, the Government has to draw up measures that would have a sustainable impact on the country's economy," he said.



The won is marked up against the dollar at Korean Exchange Bank in Seoul yesterday

Halifax puts 5% limit on house price rise in 1998

BY SARA MCCONNELL

HOUSE prices have peaked and will rise by just 5 per cent on average in 1998, curbed by higher interest rates and a slowing economy, the Halifax is expected to report next week.

The bank's predictions will come at the end of a patchy year, which saw rises of up to 40 per cent in some prime areas of London while prices in other parts of the country remained almost static.

Across the nation prices will end 1997 up to 12 per cent higher on average than at the start of the year, bolstered by a booming London market flush with cash from City bonuses and overseas investors.

The Halifax is expected to predict that the number of homes changing hands will remain steady at 1.5 million next year after rising by a higher-than-anticipated 16 per cent in 1997. More people have bought and sold properties every year since their low point in the depths of recession in 1991. But levels of activity are still below the 1.6 million recorded in more "normal" years during the 1980s, and well below the 2.2 million who bought and sold in the peak year of 1988.

Shortages of property for sale, which were a major factor in pushing up prices in 1997, should ease as more homeowners decide to sell rather than hold out for higher prices. This is already happening in London and the South East and will "ripple out" towards the rest of the country during 1998.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors reported last week that growing numbers of estate agents in the South were seeing price falls. Disparities between London and the rest of the country should lessen as the capital slows down and growth in northern counties strengthens slightly.

New homes should also come to market in 1998, further increasing the supply.

The cumulative effect of five interest rate rises since Labour came to power in May is finally starting to hit the housing market and will continue to do so next year, especially if there is a further quarter percentage point rise in the base rate. Standard variable mortgage rates have risen from 7.25 per cent at the beginning of January 1997 to 8.7 per cent now.

A borrower with a £50,000 repayment loan would have seen his monthly bills increase by £58, from £338 to £380, according to the Halifax. Many borrowers whose payments are calculated once a year will face substantially higher bills at the beginning of next year. Cuts in mortgage interest tax relief from April will further dampen buyers' enthusiasm.

Next week, the latest monthly house price index from the Nationwide, Halifax's close rival, is expected to reveal a month-on-month rise in December that is only slightly higher than November's 0.5 per cent.

Nationwide, which has been consistently more bullish than the Halifax this year, predicts that prices across the country will rise by 7 per cent next year, compared with 12 per cent in 1997. But Paul Sanderson, Nationwide's head of research said: "Although house price rises may be past their peak, the recovery in the housing market should have further to go next year, particularly in those areas outside London and the South East which have seen modest gains to date".

But Dr Sanderson gave warning that higher interest rates and a slowdown in the economy are the main threats to a continuing recovery.

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5013.8	(-35.9)
Yield		
FTSE All share	2358.07	(-13.62)
Nikkei	14802.60	(-497.50)
New York:		
Dow Jones	7679.31	(+19.18)
S&P Composite	936.46	(+3.76)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5½%**	
Long Bond	$103\frac{3}{32}$	($103\frac{1}{32}$)
Yield	5.9%	(5.88%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	$7\frac{9}{16}$%**
Liffe long gilt future (Mar)	$121\frac{7}{16}$**

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6693*	(1.6575)
London:		
$	1.6707	(1.6705)
DM	2.9650	(2.9623)
FFr	9.9225	(9.9140)
SFr	2.3980	(2.3919)
Yen	216.70	(217.06)
£ Index	104.9	(104.9)

DOLLAR

London:		
DM	1.7740*	(1.7740)
FFr	5.9360*	(5.9375)
SFr	1.4337*	(1.4330)
Yen	130.40*	(129.35)
$ Index		

Tokyo close Yen

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar) $17.55**

GOLD

London close $296.1 $293.35

*Midday trading. **December 24.

Cola wars

Doug Ivester, Coke's Mr Nasty, hopes to freeze out rivals in the soft drinks market in America. His first target is not Pepsi but Dr Pepper, the drink produced by Britain's Cadbury Schweppes. Oliver August assesses Mr Ivester's chances of matching the success of his predecessor, the late Roberto Goizueta.

Page 41

DMG suffers

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell continues to pay a heavy price some 15 months after the Peter Young scandal rocked the PEP sector, with its retail funds declining by 19 per cent. Leading Pep brokers report weak demand from private investors for DMG's products.

Page 41

Tempus review

Carl Mortished reviews the Tempus selection of shares for 1997 and the portfolio's performance against a surprisingly strong FTSE 100 share index.

Page 41

JAPAN RACKETEERING

DAIWA and Nikko, two of Japan's top brokerages, have been fined a total of Y340 million (£1.56 million) for paying off a corporate racketeer, it was announced yesterday.

Daiwa was fined Y100 million by the Japan Securities Dealers Association and Y90 million by the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Nikko was fined Y80 million by the association and Y70 million by the stock exchange.

The fines followed the Finance Ministry's decision last week to suspend Daiwa and Nikko from dealing in equities and government bonds for illegal trades to generate profits to pay off Ryuichi Koike, a known racketeer.

Both firms pleaded guilty to the charges when when they announced the resignations of several executives who accepted responsibility earlier this year. Daiwa is suspended until April 24, and Nikko until March 4.

The *sokaiya* racketeers threaten to expose company secrets at shareholders' meetings unless paid off. Some of Japan's most prominent companies have been tarnished in the case.

SOUTH KOREA EMBEZZLEMENT

SOUTH KOREA'S Supreme Court yesterday upheld a 15-year prison sentence handed down to the owner of Hanbo Steel Industries, the nation's second-largest steel company, which collapsed in January under the weight of debts of £3.6 billion.

Chung Tae Soo, 73, the owner of Hanbo, was found guilty of embezzling 191 billion won (£127.5 million) and using a portion of it to bribe government officials, politicians and bank officials.

Bo Kun, Chung's 43-year-old son, who ran the steel firm on behalf of his father, received a suspended three-year sentence.

Also found guilty was Hong In Kil, a lifetime personal aide to former President Kim Young Sam. He was given a six-year sentence, plus a fine of one billion won, equivalent to the bribe he received.

Kwon Ro Gap, an Opposition legislator, received a five-year term and a fine of 250 million won. Two ruling party members were given suspended three-year sentences.

Magnet faces strike during sale month

BY OUR CITY STAFF

AS THE post-Christmas sales got under way yesterday, a month-long strike began at 200 Magnet stores across the country.

Unions claim that the company has dismissed workers and not offered pay rises to remaining staff. Protesters will picket the stores until sales finish at the end of January.

Ian Crammond, secretary of the strike committee, said that Magnet had sacked 350 workers who went on strike, after proper ballots, to protest that 40 per cent of their colleagues were not being offered a pay rise after a three-year pay freeze.

Magnet is a subsidiary of Berisford, the former commodities company that is now engaged in the supply of kitchen furniture and commercial food service equipment.

Tax change spells pay cut

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

MILLIONS of people face a cut in take-home pay in the new year because of changes to profit-related pay (PRP) introduced by the last Government.

From January, the tax relief on PRP will begin to be phased out. By the year 2000 the relief will be completely abolished.

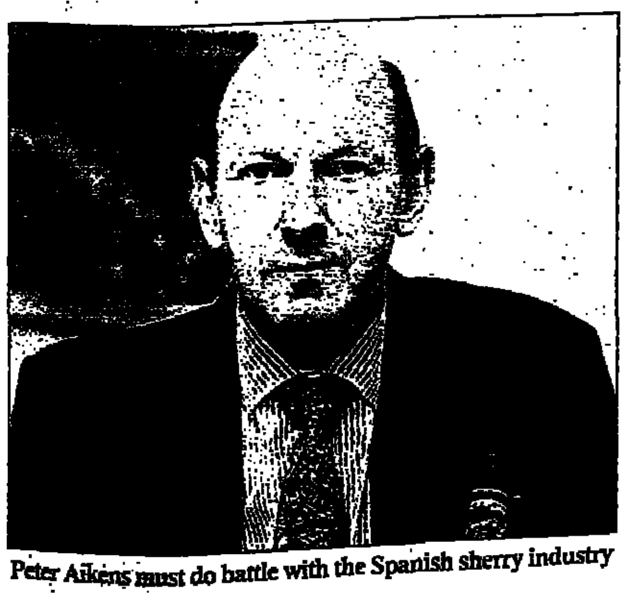
The Inland Revenue says that around 3.7 million workers enjoy tax relief through PRP. Companies such as Barclays and Boots are among those that offer PRP with tax relief. At present, employees get tax relief on £4,000 of PRP. From next year, the limit will be cut to £2,000. In 1999 it will be £1,000 before being scrapped entirely.

An employee paying higher-rate tax who earns more than £4,000 in PRP will be £66 a month worse off, a basic-rate taxpayer will be £38 a month worse off. According to Ernst & Young and Arthur Andersen, the accountancy firms, less than half of the employers who offer PRP schemes have informed their employees about the impact of the changes. The accountants have also found a reluctance among employers to increase wages to make up for the loss.

Boots, for example, estimates that an employee earning an average wage of £10,000 will be £200 a year worse off when the tax relief is abolished entirely. Barclays, meanwhile, says that from next year an employee earning £35,000 will be £400 a year worse off.

Not so prosperous, page 48

QC has hangover from Spanish tipple



Peter Aikens must do battle with the Spanish sherry industry

BY PAUL DURMAN AND DOMINIC WALSH

SPANISH sherry makers have brought some seasonal cheer to their lawyers by reopening an old dispute with the company behind QC, the drink once known as the British sherry.

John Harvey, Croft, Gonzalez Byass and Pedro Domecq are among the Spanish companies that are seeking exemplary and aggravated damages from Matthew Clark, QC's owner. Matthew Clark, whose chief executive is Peter Aikens, is accused of breaking the terms of a 1992 European Community agreement that has for the past two years prevented the company from referring to QC as sherry.

Venerable names from Spain's sherry industry, including Osborne y Cia, are mounting the latest legal action. The sherry companies fought a long legal battle to secure their right to the name, even threatening to take the dispute to the European Court of Justice.

True sherry must come from the region around Jerez in Andalusia — indeed, the word is a corruption of Xeres, an old spelling of Jerez. QC and other similarly ersatz drinks have had to be relabelled as British fortified wines.

Matthew Clark seems to have broken the sherry dictat inadvertently. The company sent out press releases about QC that included market research referring to "the sherry category". This was too much for the sherry companies and the Jerez authority that polices use of the name.

The ten plaintiffs are seeking an injunction to prevent Matthew Clark promoting its products as sherry, and are demanding accounts made from the passing off that has allegedly taken place.

Matthew Clark shares closed on Christmas Eve at a 1997 low of 166½p. The company's cider business has been adversely affected by competition from alcopops.

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Michael Clark on the state of the markets in 1997

Malaysia's Dr Mahathir: "traitors"

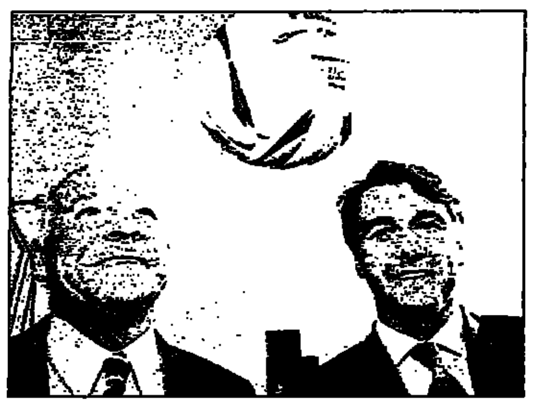
South Korea's Kim Dae Jung: "flabbergasted" at state of economy

Jarvis's Paris Moayedi: boom year

Sears' Sir Bob Reid: 44 per cent fall

George Soros: finger of suspicion

NatWest's Lord Alexander: failed merger talks



JJB Sport's David Whelan, left, and Duncan Sharpe

Laura Ashley's shares were a notable casualty

Year of the tiger shoot but nerves hold firm in London

A row between Mahathir Mohamad and George Soros laid bare fatal weaknesses in Asian economies but fears of global meltdown failed to materialise

It started off as a slanging match between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and the crown prince of speculators, George Soros, and almost ended in global economic meltdown.

In any event, it meant a rocky end to the year for investors around the globe and the prospect of an uncertain start to 1998.

Mr Soros had highlighted the underlying problems of a number of the Tiger economies. Over a period of months he sold short various currencies, which went largely unnoticed in the West.

It was only when Dr Mahathir made his now famous attack on the likes of Mr Soros — claiming that speculators were traitors and should be hung — that the true extent of the problem began to emerge. But by then it was too late. The cracks had begun to appear in Hong Kong just a few months after the former British colony had been handed over to the nationalist Chinese Government. The writing was also on the wall for the other big players in the Asian theatre.

Japan was next. The inherent problems of the Japanese banking system had been chronicled for some time. Most banks were overstretched, a large number of loans were dubious and a web of racketeering ran throughout the entire system. It was only a matter of time before things soured.

In the event, it was the collapse of Yamaichi, one of Japan's biggest broking houses, that proved to be the catalyst. Not even the public tears and apologies of Shohei Nozawa, president of Yamaichi, could prevent the firm going under.

The domino effect continued. Now it was the turn of the booming economy of South Korea where the fallout was to be the most destructive. The currency halved in value against the US dollar in just a couple of months while the government thrashed out a $55 billion rescue package with the International Monetary Fund. Even the President-elect, Kim Dae Jung, said that he was "flabbergasted" by the state of the Korean economy.

For most of the fourth quarter London held its breath, fearing the Korean debacle would trigger the end to the bull market that had lifted UK shares to record highs. Instead, investors held their nerve and have been rewarded by some of the best overall returns to date.

Leading shares certainly performed much better than analysts had forecast at the start of 1997, with the FTSE 100 index up 22 per cent on the year so far.

It had been feared the election of a Labour Government in May would spell disaster for the City. In fact, little separated Labour policies from those of the Conservatives and business was largely unmoved by the change of government.

That was good news for shareholders and there was a great deal more of them by the middle of the year than at the start. The demutualisations that took place throughout the year, including the Woolwich, Halifax, Northern Rock and Norwich Union, created 18 million new shareholders, providing windfalls of £36 billion.

The economic backdrop also proved favourable to investors throughout 1997, with inflation dropping to its lowest level and corporate earnings growing steadily. The stock market shrugged off the ill-effects of five straight interest rates rises by the newly independent Bank of England.

One of the strongest performers was the financial sector, already boosted by those windfalls. As the year wore on it became obvious that the financial services industry would undergo a period of consolidation. NatWest was involved in merger talks, albeit unsuccessfully, with Barclays, Abbey National and the Prudential. The continuing speculation should again underpin the sector in the new year.

London's best-performing share of 1997 was Abacus Recruitment, the City-based recruitment specialist, whose shares trade on the Alternative Investment Market. The shares climbed a staggering 177 per cent during the year, to 233p. That compares with the 16p at which they were floated in September 1995. The company has benefited from heavy recruitment in the financial sector, particularly of information technology specialists, and a general decline in unemployment levels and the tighter labour market. The shares move to a full listing next month.

Jarvis, the construction group whose chief executive is Paris Moayedi, came a close second with a leap of 165 per cent, to 376½p. It has not looked back since buying the Northern Infrastructure Maintenance business for British Rail last year. Earlier this year it bought Fastline for £50 million and enjoyed an early Christmas present when it was awarded building and management contracts totalling £670 million.

Surprisingly, a retailer captured third spot with JJB Sports soaring 147 per cent to 647p. The sportswear retailer, founded by David Whelan, the former Blackburn Rovers footballer, has made the most of the fashion for football club replica shirts. The qualification by England and Scotland for next year's football World Cup finals in France should give JJB a further lift in 1998.

A number of blue chip companies did well in 1997. Nycomed Amersham ended on a firm note, climbing 92 per cent to £22.53 after the merger of Amersham International and the Norwegian diagnostics company, Hafslund Nycomed, to become a constituent of the FTSE 250. Vodafone rose 81 per cent to 450p, driven by bid speculation.

There were also some spectacularly grim performances. The biggest faller was BKG Resources, traded on AIM, which tumbled from a peak of 237p to 11½p. Other notable casualties include Laura Ashley, down 79 per cent at 36p, after touching a peak of 167½p. Growing losses led to the departure of Ann Iverson, its American chief executive. Other retailers who suffered were Sears, whose chairman is Sir Bob Reid, down 44 per cent at 50½p, and MFI Furniture, down 40 per cent at 112p.

A profit warning took its toll on Frederick Cooper, down 78 per cent at 9p, while Azlan fell 74 per cent to 56p after returning from suspension amid allegations of accounting irregularities.

Aromascan also finished 70 per cent down at 25½p on news of increased losses.

TEMPUS

Royal & Sun offers bright patch in mixed forecast

Who would have guessed 12 months ago that the FTSE 100 index would soar above 5,000? Then, certain leading fund managers were predicting Armageddon, pointing to a market with a historically high price to earnings ratio and low dividend yield. To those stockpickers who seek value — read inexpensive — investments, the banks and pharmaceutical companies appeared to be heading for a massive correction. But even the recent turmoil in the Far East, which upset HSBC and Standard Chartered, could not hold back the banks which showed gains of 40 per cent over 12 months, while drug companies boasted a similar advance.

Tempus had an unexceptional year, having failed to pick shares in either of these sectors. The portfolio gained modestly in value, up 4.4 per cent with one very poor choice spoiling the performance of some winners. Tempus made some sensible decisions, avoiding the most cyclical industrial sectors, such as chemicals, steel, domestic engineering companies and the packaging industry. The FTSE general industrials index fell 2 per cent during a year in which the All-share index rose 17 per cent.

Tempus was worried about the strength of sterling at the start of the year and the likelihood of interest rate increases, whatever the outcome of the election, worsening the plight of exporters. Hence, its decision to steer clear of much of the capital goods sector. Sadly, the prediction proved accurate: base rates rose a hefty 1¼ points to 7¼ per cent with the new Labour puritans proving intolerant of inflation.

Tempus missed out on the continued strength of the privatised utilities. Water and electricity shares thumbed their nose at the Government's windfall tax, ending the year with gains of almost 40 per cent, adding further lustre to the Footsie. Hopes of further cash handouts in the form of special dividends and share buybacks kept the utilities on the boil.

Best among the Tempus tips was Royal & SunAlliance whose shares gained 32 per cent over the period. Fears that the company would be slow or even fail to achieve cost savings kept the shares back in the first few months. But as the year wore on, it became clear that the merger in 1996 of Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance was more than a meeting of minds in the boardroom. First came news of a 5 per cent share buyback, the first such move from an insurer. That was followed by a good set of interim figures and indications that staff reduction targets were being achieved. Finally, the minds in the boardroom proved able to think the unthinkable by removing the dual leadership of chief executive Richard Gamble and deputy chairman Roger Taylor and replacing them with Bob Mendelsohn, head of Royal Sun's US operations.

Another industry beset by corporate upheaval is telecoms where the largest players in Europe and North American are attempting to use their domestic franchises to achieve international ambitions. Much of the future activity will be led from the largest telecoms market, the United States.

Tempus chose to bet on Cable & Wireless and ignore BT on the grounds that the latter's venture with MCI was too high risk and would in the end embroil it in a US price war. The prediction about BT's American strategy proved extremely accurate, but what Tempus did not foresee was BT's extraordinary luck in extricating itself from the clutches of MCI with a big profit from the sale of its MCI shares to WorldCom.

Cable & Wireless did reasonably well, gaining more than 9 per cent during the year and proving highly resilient to the Asian stock market gyrations, despite its interest in Hongkong Telecom. Having merged its UK telephony and cable TV operations into a separate vehicle, C&W is now pruning its worldwide portfolio of weak or extraneous businesses. Far from being a potential problem, C&W's core Hong Kong business will be central to the future success of this group.

Tempus chose two consumer oriented shares in the not unreasonable hope that a buoyant UK economy and rapidly falling unemployment would stimulate top-line growth in the shops and in leisure businesses. In addition, the prospect of a £20 billion windfall to holders of building society shares suggested the strong possibility an extra fillip to spending.

The decision to back Rank was unfortunate and demonstrates how a cheap and unloved share is sometimes not a bargain but deservedly cheap. It is also a lesson in how bull markets tend to punish over-capitalised companies with low-growth businesses. Tempus hoped that the change in management at Rank and the prospect of a cash windfall from the sale of shares in Rank Xerox would revitalise this large but stagnating leisure group. In the event, it was not to be and the shares lost more than 20 per cent of their value. Rank did not get an exceptional price for Xerox and its core bingo and Butlins operations failed to shine. But most disappointing was the lack of good ideas from the management on how to spend the embarrassment of riches.

Burton has been harshly treated by the stock market after a good run in 1996. Part of the problem has been the succession of interest rate rises and growing suspicion about future sales growth among all but the strongest retailers. Burton's decision to demerge the highly successful Debenhams was sound and should leave Arcadia, the rump of chain stores, looking cheap but it came too late to make a difference.

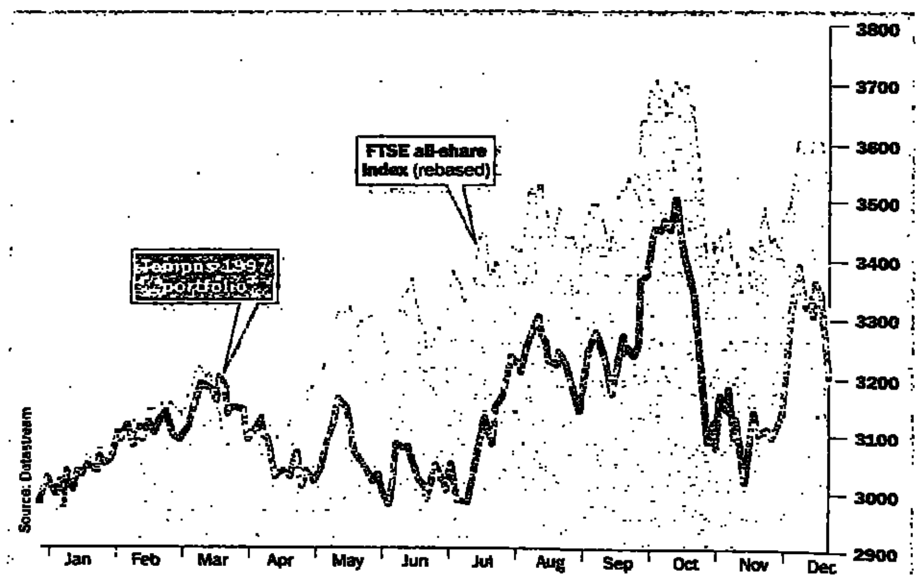
Fearful of the cyclical capital goods sector, Tempus plumped for the safest engineer on the block, Siebe, which ended the year marginally ahead of where it started despite blockbuster profits growth.

And, finally, Cairn Energy comfortably outpaced its peers in the oil exploration sector with a 19 per cent gain because of its thundering success in Bangladesh. Delays in the award of new licences took the shine off Cairn shares late in the year — as did a sagging oil price. The fortunes of oil explorers look less certain next year but Tempus shall look more closely at that and other issues when it chances its hand next week in six shares for 1998.

CARL MORTISHED

OUR 1997 PORTFOLIO

Share	12/96	12/97	Gain/Loss
Cable & Wireless	484p	528½p	+ 9.2%
Royal Sun	443p	585p	+32.1%
Rank	432p	338½p	-21.6%
Burton	156½p	131¾p	-15.8%
Siebe	1070p	1110p	+3.7%
Cairn Energy	416p	495p	+19%
Portfolio Average			
FTSE All-share	2,011	2,358	+17.2%
FTSE 100	4,115	5,013	+21.8%



Source: Datastream

World class

A STORY being told by Gordon Brown, our laughing Chancellor, which he seems to have picked up at the IMF. God calls three world leaders, President Clinton, Jiang Zemin, President of China, and Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, to a briefing. The world is going to end in three days, he says, now go away and tell your people. President Clinton addresses the nation. "I have some good news and some bad news. Our faith has been rewarded: God does exist. The bad news is that the world will end in three days."

President Jiang tells a billion Chinese he has some bad news and some very bad news. The bad news: atheistic communism was wrong all along. Even worse: the world will end in three days. Dr Mahathir tells his people he has some good news and some even better news. The good news: he is one of the three most powerful leaders in the world. The even better news? "In three days' time the Asian financial crisis will be over."

Gordon Brown, our laughing Chancellor, told an unexpected joke

● *POSITIVELY the last joke at the expense of the chosen name for the merged Guinness and Grand Metropolitan ... this year, anyway. Wits now say Diageo, the name the marketing men have foisted on the merger, stands for Don't Imagine Any Great Employment Opportunities. Except that for some reason no one at GrandMet seems to find this terribly funny.*

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

High interest

IT WAS Christmas Eve and not a soul stirred. Except at the various 24-hour banking services, which reported heavy business during the small hours of Christmas morning, when none save Santa and his elves should have been abroad.

Bank of Scotland's Banking Direct was surprised by the number of calls, including festive wishes from customers based in England for lower interest rates in the new year. Over at First Direct, as midnight struck, someone requested a foreign currency payment. Within the first hour, a Yorkshireman decided to pay his utility bill, while an expat in China queried a standing order and requested a current balance. But financial transactions weren't the only concern, alas. First Direct is perched precariously on a hill above Leeds, and the high winds were causing some worries.

Wheel crazy

AS WE all look forward to the January sales, a warning from Hudson, Ohio. Keen to drum up some free publicity, a car dealer at the weekend decided to sell 250 cars at silly prices, some as low as $5 each. The assumption was that in the cold Midwest weather no one would queue overnight. The day, alas, dawned unseasonably warm, to illuminate a scene of thousands of waiting bargain-hunters.

The dealer opted for a Darwinian solution. He released them all at the same time to rush to the wheel of their chosen vehicle, first come, first served. The predictable result was fighting and some injuries. The ad man who thought up the idea described the scramble as "exhilarating". The police were less impressed.

Bitter grounds

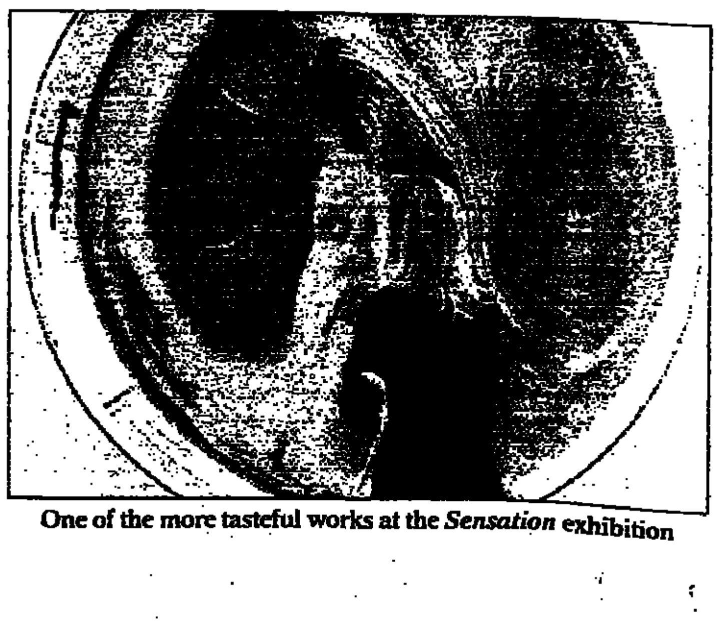
THE Seattle Coffee Company does not, as its army of City fans will tell you, sell coffee. It sells "tall, slim mochas", "skinny lattes" and so on — these are lifestyle options, you know. The company prides itself on individuality, often to the point of nausea ("I found my life at Seattle. I found myself at Seattle," it says on the wall of one outlet). Strange, then, that customers at its Covent Garden store find a petition from staff protesting that head office has banned everyone from dying their hair or piercing any visible part of their anatomy. Support from customers has come rolling in with comments such as "shocking", "have they no shame?" and even "kill them", which doesn't sound too, er, laid-back. What is worse, the Covent Garden crew are top of the endangered species list with a shock of purple hair and one eyebrow stud between them.

● *PROBABLY the best excuse yet from South West Trains, heard over the Tannoy at Winchester station: "We apologise for the late running of this train. This is due to a banana which has fallen between the carriage and the platform."*

Art attack

A FUNNY story reaches me from Price Waterhouse. Yes, really. It seems PW decided to hold a dinner for retired partners. Much debate about the location — somewhere upmarket, posh and artistic, show them we're not all philistines, you know. Someone settled on the Royal Academy, just the thing. And one or two retired partners had their digestion well and truly ruined, because you cannot get to the dining room without going through the exhibition area. They should perhaps have waited until the new year, because *Sensation* is due to close tomorrow.

MARTIN WALLER



One of the more tasteful works at the *Sensation* exhibition

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Sweet-talking Mr Nasty prepares for a bitter clash

Doug Ivester exchanged gifts with Nelson Mandela as Coke announced investments in South Africa

Coke's chief is determined to freeze out all rivals, says Oliver August

Even in the cut-throat world of American capitalism, Doug Ivester has always stood out as a thug. Until a few weeks ago he was number two to Roberto Goizueta, the head of Coca-Cola.

The two men were said to have perfected a "Mr Nice and Mr Nasty" routine. Mr Goizueta was a grandfatherly public figure, while Mr Ivester privately told staff: "What do you do when your competitor is drowning? Get a live hose and stick it in his mouth."

But Mr Ivester, who earlier this year met Nelson Mandela as Coke announced a major investment in South Africa, is nevertheless thought to be one of the most visionary US businessmen. He impressed Wall Street and Warren Buffett, one of Coke's main investors, in overseeing the recent demerger of Coke's bottling arm. Coke kept a minority stake, giving it continuing control without tying up large amounts of capital.

When Mr Goizueta died of cancer in October, few were surprised that Mr Ivester was instantly named as his successor. And now that he no longer has a Mr Nice to smooth over the edges, Mr Ivester has begun to strike softer notes.

He told the US National Soft Drinks Association last month that cola companies need not compete so hard. He said: "We don't sell nuclear power plants and satellites and communications systems — we sell sweetened water. We keep fighting over the same old landscapes, the same pieces of ground, when there are broad new vistas to be explored."

But veterans of the 100-year-old cola war between Coke and its rivals are not deceived by America's foremost sweet-water seller. Coke is not about to be sweet to its competitors. Mr Ivester is posturing. Coke is on the warpath again, and this time Cadbury Schweppes, not Pepsi, is the main target.

Cadbury has carved out a remarkably profitable niche in the $55 billion (£32.9 billion) a year US soft drinks market. Its Dr Pepper drink is outselling similar spicy, fizzy, black cherry beverages by 13 to one. The drink, a traditional beverage of the Deep South with its highest sales in Texas, has won a huge following across the US. Last year it achieved sales of $4 billion. Together with Seven Up sales and a few smaller brands, Dr Pepper has given Cadbury a 15 per cent US market share.

Keen to stamp his own seal on Coke's fortunes, Mr Ivester wants to retake some of Cadbury's market share. Coke makes its own peppery cherry drink called Mr Pibb. But the fizz has gone out of its sales and the drink is being removed from retailers' shelves.

According to industry sources and *Advertising Age*, Coke is preparing for Mr Pibb's demise. The brand is to be replaced by a new peppery cherry drink that will be launched with an almighty advertising blitz.

Reworking the old estate agent line about the importance of location, a Coke insider said: "There are three important factors in this business: marketing, marketing, marketing."

High-octane advertising strategies are a staple in the soft drinks industry. Without saturation advertising, vendors cannot be persuaded to stock new drinks. And without vending slots, bottlers will not free up capacity in their plants.

Coke successfully mastered this problem when it recently launched a caffeinated citrus drink called Surge. Coke's advertising more than matched the fizzy energy of the drink itself. Gary Hemphill, of Beverage Marketing, said: "Coke could use the same strategy as it did with Surge. It is going to be about marketing, not flavours."

But more important than the marketing will be the bottling. It is no exaggeration to say that the cola wars could also be called the bottling wars, because of the fragmented nature of the US bottling sector. Mr Hemphill said: "It is going to be a tough sell for Coke to ask its bottlers to drop a big revenue producer like Dr Pepper for something that isn't proven."

Coke's shareholders will soon find out how wise Mr Ivester's demerger of the bottling arm was. Does its 44 per cent stake yield sufficient control over management?

Yet compared with Cadbury, Coke is still in a very comfortable position. Although Coke no longer has the power to position its bottlers like pieces on a chess board, Cadbury is without a bottling network altogether. Since it bought Dr Pepper and Seven Up for £1.6 billion two years ago, it has had to rely on Coke and Pepsi-owned or affiliated bottlers and less sophisticated independent bottlers.

Not resting on its Dr Pepper laurels, Cadbury has this year relaunched Seven Up to catch up on Coke's sourer Sprite drink. However, the move has been slowed by the bottling system. Bottlers control distribution and have a huge influence over the shelf placement of drinks.

To back up its US soft drink offensive, Cadbury has decided to build up its own bottling network through acquisitions. It is currently in negotiations with two Midwestern bottlers in a deal said to be worth around $700 million.

The expansion is a key plank in the plan of John Sutherland, the new Cadbury chief executive, to increase profits by 10 per cent a year. But he is facing two further complications. First, the now semi-independent Coke bottling group has started to acquire extra bottlers. Secondly, Pepsi is preparing its own attack on Sprite with a new drink called Storm, to be launched next year.

Craig Weatherup, the Pepsi chief executive, is every bit as tenacious as Mr Ivester and his pockets are filled with $5 billion. He said he was "ready to do battle". Mr Weatherup portrayed Pepsi as building its business "brick by methodical brick", like the little pig of storybook fame. He said: "At the end of this story, the piglet who built his house out of bricks ate the wolf. The only person in our midst who pretends to be a wolf is some guy at Coke."

Barclaycard helps to allay slump fears

Barclays has added its voice to the growing number of financial institutions dismissing reports of a high street spending slump. It said that spending on Barclaycard rose 7 per cent in the weekend before Christmas. The company expects to see £1.8 billion spent through its credit card in November — a like-for-like rise of 8 per cent on last year.

The figures are the latest available solid indicator of high street sales and underscore the line taken by Verdict, the retail consultancy, that reports of empty tills are being exaggerated. Richard Hyman, chairman of Verdict, said that even in the depths of recession December sales always make up between 11 and 11.6 per cent of annual retail figures. He said: "If the Christmas retail figures come out the way people seem to be saying it will be an unprecedented disaster for the economy — and I don't think things are anywhere near as bad."

Leading article, page 21

Pernod denial

Pernod Ricard and Remy Cointreau, the two French drinks groups, poured cold water on takeover speculation sparked by Pernod's sale of its Orangina business this week. But officials at the two companies left the door open for distribution deals. Pernod sold Orangina to Coca-Cola for Fr5 billion (about £500 million). François Heriard-Dubreuil, Remy managing director and a member of the family that controls the company, said: "The Heriard-Dubreuil family, which holds 55.2 per cent of the capital, is not selling. We're open, however, to distribution accords with Pernod Ricard."

Dana clearance

Dana Corporation's $287 million (£171 million) takeover of the heavy-axle and brake business of Eaton Corporation has been cleared by the US Federal Trade Commission. The division is expected to report sales of $600 million in 1997. Dana expects to complete the transaction in early January. It is now seeking regulatory approval to close factories in Mexico and India. Factories in America, the UK, Argentina and Spain are expected to remain open.

Peps scandal fuels 19% decline in DMG assets

By Gavin Lumsden

PRIVATE investors are continuing to shun Deutsche Morgan Grenfell 15 months after the Peter Young scandal erupted over his management of three of its European funds.

Such has been the exodus that assets in the 17 Morgan Grenfell retail funds, which are available as Peps, have shrunk by almost £474 million since September 1996, a reduction of 19.2 per cent. Meanwhile, unit trust assets held in Peps generally have grown by more than 50 per cent, to £35.2 billion.

The three funds that were under the control of Mr Young — Europa, European Growth and European Capital Growth — have borne the brunt of the damage, losing £428 million. However, there are also signs of a wider malaise at Morgan Grenfell, where performance has suffered across the board. This is in stark contrast to its record previously as a top quartile performer.

Leading Pep brokers have reported virtually no demand for the group's Peps all year, but have seen a growing trend among investors to transfer their holdings to other fund managers.

Haydn Green, managing director of The Pep Shop, one of the largest intermediaries in the Pep market, said that redemptions from investors were forcing Morgan Grenfell's fund managers to sell their best stock, thereby further hampering fund performance. Mr Green said that in view of these developments he was no longer advising clients not to sell.

"My view when the scandal broke was to say don't panic and sit tight," he said. "It has changed now. The company has not managed to retain its performance and my Pep clients, particularly first-time investors, are getting more and more irritated. I can no longer defend the Morgan Grenfell position."

He went on: "Next year is likely to turn into a flood unless something miraculous happens. I feel very sorry for them. All this has happened because of one man."

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell has paid a high price for the Young affair. Deutsche Bank, its parent, had to inject £180 million into the three funds, which were suspended for 72 hours after the discovery of serious irregularities.

In April the fund manager was fined £3 million by the Investment Managers Regulatory Organisation (Imro) and has had to pay £190 million compensation to 180,000 investors since then.

Mr Young was first suspended and then subsequently dismissed when it was discovered that he had breached rules restricting the level of investment in unquoted companies. Mr Young remains the subject of an investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, although no charges have been pressed.

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell declined to comment.

Unions back TUC energy operation

By Christine Buckley

UNION ENERGY, the Trades Union Congress's energy-selling operation, has won the backing of unions representing 1.7 million members.

Eight unions have signed up to the TUC's gas and electricity marketing division, which was launched at the trade union movement's congress in September. Union Energy had been opposed by Unison and several other unions, which argued that the venture endorsed utility privatisation and was a step too near to a TUC plc.

Union Energy claims it can offer a 25 per cent discount on British Gas bills and 10 per cent on electricity bills. Competition in household gas is being introduced in Britain in a phased regional programme. Electricity is due to start on a similar basis in April.

Opencast mining may be restricted

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

THE Government is expected to announce tough restrictions on opencast coal mining early in the new year. It is likely that Richard Caborn, Minister for the Regions, will introduce a moratorium on new developments in a move to support the market for deep-mined coal.

Mr Caborn shaped the Government's recent action plan to solve the short-term crisis in the coal industry after the Prime Minister stepped into the controversy and shifted responsibility from the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr Caborn will take action on opencast mining as part of his responsibility for planning.

The move will dismay the many small companies involved in opencast mining and it will also hit RJB Mining, the biggest deep mine company, which has substantial opencast interests. But it will please environmental groups, which have long campaigned against opencast mining.

By restricting opencast development, there will be a better long-term market for deep-mined coal. The threatened closure of up to eight pits with the loss of 5,000 jobs triggered the recent crisis in coal, which provoked a sharp policy U-turn by the Government.

The coal industry issued a warning that the future of deep mining was at risk because of the difficulties involved in reopening collieries once they have been closed. Opencast mines produced 15.75 million tonnes of coal this year, compared with 31 million tonnes produced by deep mines.

UniChem deal to face final hurdle

By Our City Staff

THE merger of UniChem, the UK retail chemist group, and Alliance Sante of France, will face its final hurdle next week when the plan is put to a vote at a shareholders' extraordinary meeting on Monday.

The bid to form the new group was given a boost after the acceptance of the merger by minority shareholders in France on Tuesday. This came a day after the European Commission approved the merger, which values the enlarged group at £970 million.

UniChem, based in Surrey and chaired by Kenneth Clarke, the former Chancellor, unveiled the merger last month. The deal will see it join forces with Alliance, Europe's second-largest pharmaceutical wholesaler.

Through Moss, its retail chemist chain, UniChem has 520 branches in the UK, and after the deal the enlarged group — to be renamed Alliance Unichem — will have 12 warehouses in the UK, where it will be the country's biggest drugs wholesaler, 66 in France and 49 in Italy. The merger follows UniChem's defeat earlier this year at the hands of Gehe, its German rival, in the battle for control of Lloyds Chemists.

Alliance Unichem hopes to take advantage of the increasing consolidation in the European drugs market as big manufacturers look to large wholesalers to handle distribution across the Continent.

Clarke: chairs UK group

Packard Bell has $300m bail-out

By Our Business Staff

A RAPID decline in the prices of personal computers has forced America's Packard Bell NEC to ask NEC Corp, its Japanese parent company, to put up a further $240 million (£144 million) to ensure its survival, it emerged yesterday.

NEC and France's Groupe Bull have agreed to invest a total of $300 million as part of the company's restructuring efforts. Groupe Bull would put up $60 million of the amount through what it called a "guarantee".

As a result of the investment NEC's voting stake will rise to 49 per cent from 19.84 per cent. The stake held by founder Packard Bell declines to 38.38 per cent from 60.32 per cent. This is the fourth investment the company has received from its shareholders in the past two years.

NEC has deliberately kept its voting rights to less than 50 per cent because it wanted to list shares of Packard Bell NEC as an American company under US managers, said Seijiro Yokoyama, NEC senior executive vice-president.

Until three years ago, the company, which was then known as Packard Bell Electronics, specialised in making PCs geared toward home users and children. However, profit margins in consumer PCs evaporated as market leaders such as IBM and Hewlett-Packard targeted the ome computer market.

In July 1995 Packard Bell agreed to let NEC buy a 20 per cent stake for $170 million to shore up its finances. NEC, based in Tokyo, had been looking for a US partner to expand its brand name in the United States. NEC invested an additional $293 million in cash in February 1996.

In July 1996, NEC merged its global PC operations outside Japan and China into Packard Bell's, creating Packard Bell NEC Inc. In June this year, NEC invested another $285 million in Packard Bell NEC.

WALL STREET

NEW YORK: Shares were slightly higher at midday in extremely light trading on Wall Street, with many investors choosing to skip an abbreviated post-Christmas session.

The Dow Jones industrial average was up 12.71 points at 7,672.84, although earlier it was 57 points ahead. Broad-market indices also retreated from some larger gains, and the number of declining issues took a narrow lead over advancers on the New York Stock Exchange. Volume came to just 101.45 million shares, nearly half as slow as the pace of Wednesday's shortened session.

Merck was the only Dow component with a move of at least a dollar, rising $1¼ to $102½. Similarly, Dell Computer was the only big technology name with a noteworthy change, rising 1\frac{3}{16}$ to 78\frac{11}{16}$ in Nasdaq trading.

Analysts said that few investors were willing to make any big bets with trading scheduled to close at 1pm and so many players taking an extended weekend.

Those who did show up for yesterday's session encountered mixed signals from overseas, with South Korean shares posting a big rebound, while Japanese stocks slid sharply.

	Dec 26 close	Dec 24 close
AMP Inc	39[illegible]	39[illegible]
AMR Corp	122[illegible]	123[illegible]
AT & T	63[illegible]	62[illegible]
Abbott Labs	65[illegible]	64[illegible]
Advanced Micro	17[illegible]	17[illegible]
Aetna Life	67[illegible]	67
Ahmanson (HF)	64[illegible]	63[illegible]
Air Prod & Chem	78[illegible]	78[illegible]
AirTouch Comm	38[illegible]	38[illegible]
Albertson's	45[illegible]	45[illegible]
Alcan Alumnm	26[illegible]	26[illegible]
Allied Signal	35[illegible]	35[illegible]
Alum Co of Am	66[illegible]	66[illegible]
Amerada Hess	51[illegible]	51[illegible]
AEP	51[illegible]	51
Amer Express	86[illegible]	85[illegible]
Amer Genl Corp	53[illegible]	52[illegible]
Amer Home Pr	73[illegible]	72[illegible]
Amer Intl	102[illegible]	102[illegible]
Amer Stores	20[illegible]	20[illegible]
Amer Standard	38[illegible]	37[illegible]
Ameritech	81[illegible]	81[illegible]
Amgen	52[illegible]	52[illegible]
Amoco	84	83[illegible]
Andrew Corp	23	22[illegible]
Anheuser-Busch	41[illegible]	41[illegible]
Apple Computer	13[illegible]	13[illegible]
Archer Daniels	21[illegible]	20[illegible]
Armco	4[illegible]	4[illegible]
Armstrng Wrld	73[illegible]	73[illegible]
Asarco	22[illegible]	22[illegible]
Atl Richfield	77	77
Atmel Corp	18[illegible]	18[illegible]
Auto Data Pro	58[illegible]	58[illegible]
Avery Dennison	43[illegible]	42[illegible]
Avon Products	59[illegible]	60
Baker Hughes	40[illegible]	41[illegible]
Baltim Gas & El	33	32[illegible]
Banc One	53	52[illegible]
BankAmerica	70[illegible]	69[illegible]
Bank of NY	55[illegible]	54[illegible]
Bankers Tr NY	111[illegible]	109[illegible]
Barnett Banks	70[illegible]	69[illegible]
Bausch & Lomb	38[illegible]	37[illegible]
Baxter Intl	47[illegible]	46[illegible]
Becton Dicknsn	48[illegible]	48[illegible]
Bell Atlantic	88[illegible]	88[illegible]
BellSouth	55[illegible]	56[illegible]
Black & Decker	38[illegible]	38[illegible]
Block (H&R)	44[illegible]	44
Boeing	47[illegible]	47[illegible]
Boise Cascade	29[illegible]	29[illegible]
Boston Scien	43[illegible]	44[illegible]
Bristol Myrs Sq	90[illegible]	89
Browning Ferris	35[illegible]	35[illegible]
Brunswick	28[illegible]	28[illegible]
Burlington Nthn	92[illegible]	92[illegible]
CMS Energy Corp	42[illegible]	42[illegible]
CPC Intl	103	103[illegible]
CSX	51[illegible]	51[illegible]
CBS Corp	28	27[illegible]
Campbell Soup	57[illegible]	56[illegible]
Carolina Pwr	42[illegible]	41[illegible]
Case Corp	57[illegible]	58[illegible]
Caterpillar	45[illegible]	46[illegible]
Central & SW	27[illegible]	27
Champion Intl	43[illegible]	43[illegible]
Chase Manhat	106[illegible]	104[illegible]
Chevron Corp	75[illegible]	75[illegible]
Chrysler	33[illegible]	33[illegible]
Chubb Corp	74[illegible]	74[illegible]
Cigna Corp	166[illegible]	166[illegible]
Citicorp	122[illegible]	120[illegible]
Clorox	74[illegible]	74[illegible]
Coastal Corp	60[illegible]	60[illegible]
Coca Cola	64[illegible]	64[illegible]
Coca Cola Ent	33[illegible]	33[illegible]
Colgate-Palm	68[illegible]	68[illegible]
Columbia Gas	77	77[illegible]
ColumbiaHCA	27[illegible]	27[illegible]
Compaq Comp	53[illegible]	53[illegible]
Comp Ass Intl	48[illegible]	46[illegible]
Conagra	32[illegible]	32[illegible]
Cons Edison	40[illegible]	40[illegible]
Cons Nat Gas	56[illegible]	56[illegible]
Cooper Inds	47[illegible]	47[illegible]
Corestates	78[illegible]	78[illegible]
Corning Inc	35[illegible]	36[illegible]
C'wide Credit	40[illegible]	41[illegible]
Crestar Finl	54[illegible]	54[illegible]
Crown Cork	49	48[illegible]
Dana Corp	44[illegible]	43[illegible]
Dayton Hudson	62[illegible]	61[illegible]
Deere	55[illegible]	55
Delta Air Lines	111[illegible]	111[illegible]
Deluxe Corp	34[illegible]	34[illegible]
Digital Equip	36[illegible]	36[illegible]
Dillard Dept St	32[illegible]	33[illegible]
Disney (Walt)	95[illegible]	95[illegible]
Dominion Res	42[illegible]	41[illegible]
Donelley (RR)	36	35[illegible]
Dover Corp	34[illegible]	34[illegible]
Dow Chemical	99	98
Dow Jones	52[illegible]	52[illegible]
Dresser	40[illegible]	39[illegible]
Duke Power	55[illegible]	55[illegible]
Dun & Bradstreet	30	30[illegible]
Du Pont	57[illegible]	58[illegible]
Eastman Chem	57[illegible]	57[illegible]
Eastman Kodak	57[illegible]	57[illegible]

	Dec 26 close	Dec 24 close
Eaton Corp	87	87[illegible]
Edison Intl	27	26[illegible]
Elect Data Sys	42[illegible]	42[illegible]
Emerson Elec	54[illegible]	55[illegible]
Engelhard Corp	17[illegible]	17[illegible]
Enron Corp	39[illegible]	40
Entergy	29[illegible]	29
Ethyl Corp	8[illegible]	8[illegible]
Exxon	60[illegible]	60[illegible]
FMC Corp	65[illegible]	65
FPL Group	59[illegible]	58[illegible]
Federal Express	57[illegible]	56[illegible]
Fifth Third Banc	78[illegible]	78[illegible]
Fleet Finl Grp	73[illegible]	73[illegible]
Fluor Corp	35[illegible]	35[illegible]
Ford Motor	47	46[illegible]
Fort James	37[illegible]	37[illegible]
Fortune Brands	36[illegible]	36[illegible]
Franklin Res	85[illegible]	84[illegible]
GTE Corp	49[illegible]	50[illegible]
Gannett	57[illegible]	58
Gap Inc Del	33[illegible]	33[illegible]
Gateway 2000	32[illegible]	32[illegible]
Gen Dynamics	83[illegible]	82[illegible]
Gen Electric	70[illegible]	71[illegible]
Gen Mills	70[illegible]	71[illegible]
Gen Motors	59[illegible]	58[illegible]
Gen Reinsurance	206[illegible]	207[illegible]
Gen Signal	41[illegible]	40[illegible]
Genuine Parts	33[illegible]	32[illegible]
Georgia Pac	60	59[illegible]
Gillette	97[illegible]	97[illegible]
Glaxo Wellc ADR	47[illegible]	47[illegible]
Goodrich (BF)	41[illegible]	41[illegible]
Goodyear Tire	61[illegible]	61[illegible]
Great Lakes	42[illegible]	42[illegible]
Halliburton	47[illegible]	46[illegible]
Harcourt General	52[illegible]	52[illegible]
Heinz (HJ)	49[illegible]	49[illegible]
Hercules	48[illegible]	48[illegible]
Hershey Foods	60[illegible]	60[illegible]
Hewlett Packard	60[illegible]	59[illegible]
Hilton Hotels	28[illegible]	28[illegible]
Home Depot	54[illegible]	54[illegible]
Homestake Mng	8[illegible]	9[illegible]
Honeywell	66[illegible]	66[illegible]
Household Intl	120[illegible]	120[illegible]
Houston Inds	25[illegible]	25[illegible]
Humana	19	18[illegible]
ITT Corp	81[illegible]	81[illegible]
Ikon Office	25[illegible]	26[illegible]
Illinois Tool	56[illegible]	56[illegible]
Illinova	26[illegible]	26[illegible]
INCO	17[illegible]	17[illegible]
Ingersoll Rand	39[illegible]	38[illegible]
Inland Steel	16[illegible]	15[illegible]
Intel Corp	70[illegible]	70[illegible]
IBM	101[illegible]	99[illegible]
Intl Flav & Fr	49[illegible]	49[illegible]
Intl Paper	42[illegible]	42[illegible]
Jhnsn & Jhnsn	65	65[illegible]
Kellogg	46[illegible]	48[illegible]
Kerr-McGee	61[illegible]	62[illegible]
Kimberly-Clark	47[illegible]	48
Kmart	10[illegible]	10[illegible]
Knight-Ridder	50[illegible]	50[illegible]
Lilly (Eli)	67[illegible]	67[illegible]
Limited Inc	23[illegible]	23[illegible]
Lincoln Nat	74[illegible]	74[illegible]
Litton	56[illegible]	55[illegible]
Liz Claiborne	39[illegible]	40[illegible]
Lockheed Martin	93[illegible]	97[illegible]
Louisiana Pac	18[illegible]	18[illegible]
MCI Comm	42[illegible]	42[illegible]
Manpower Inc	34	34[illegible]
Marriott Int	66[illegible]	68[illegible]
Marsh & McLnn	70[illegible]	70[illegible]
Masco Corp	50[illegible]	50[illegible]
May Dept St	50[illegible]	50[illegible]
Maytag Corp	35[illegible]	[illegible]
McDonalds	45[illegible]	45[illegible]
McGraw Hill	69[illegible]	70
Mead Corp	28	27[illegible]
Meditrust Corp	35[illegible]	35[illegible]
Medtronic	49[illegible]	49[illegible]
Mellon Bk	59[illegible]	58[illegible]
Merck Inc	103[illegible]	101[illegible]
Mercury Fin	[illegible]	[illegible]
Merrill Lynch	67[illegible]	67[illegible]
Microsoft	120[illegible]	118[illegible]
Minnesota Mine	83[illegible]	84[illegible]
Mirage Resorts	22	21[illegible]
Mobil Corp	70[illegible]	70[illegible]
Monsanto	[illegible]	[illegible]
Morgan (JP)	111[illegible]	110[illegible]
Motorola Inc	55[illegible]	55[illegible]
Mylan Labs	20	20[illegible]
Natl Semi	25[illegible]	25[illegible]
Natl Service Ind	46[illegible]	46[illegible]
Navistar Intl	22[illegible]	22[illegible]
NY Times A	64[illegible]	64[illegible]
Newmont Mng	29[illegible]	29[illegible]
Nike B	39	38[illegible]
NL Industries	12[illegible]	12[illegible]
Nordstrom	55[illegible]	56[illegible]
Norfolk Sthn	29[illegible]	29[illegible]
Nthn State Pwr	58[illegible]	58[illegible]
Norwest Corp	35[illegible]	35[illegible]
Occidental Pet	28[illegible]	28[illegible]
Oracle	21[illegible]	21[illegible]

	Dec 26 close	Dec 24 close
Oryx Energy Co	22[illegible]	22[illegible]
Owens Corning	33[illegible]	33[illegible]
PPG Industries	56[illegible]	56
PMI Group	70[illegible]	70[illegible]
PNC Bank	54[illegible]	54[illegible]
PP&L Res	23[illegible]	23[illegible]
Paccar Inc	52[illegible]	51[illegible]
Pacificorp	26[illegible]	26[illegible]
Pac Enterprises	30[illegible]	30[illegible]
PaineWebber	33[illegible]	33[illegible]
Pall Corp	20[illegible]	20[illegible]
Parker Hannifin	45[illegible]	45[illegible]
Peco Energy	24[illegible]	24[illegible]
Penney (JC)	57[illegible]	57[illegible]
Pennzoil	66[illegible]	66[illegible]
Pepsico	34[illegible]	34[illegible]
Pfizer	71[illegible]	70[illegible]
Pharm & Upjohn	36[illegible]	36[illegible]
Phelps Dodge	61	61[illegible]
Philip Morris	43[illegible]	44[illegible]
Phillips Pet	46[illegible]	47[illegible]
Pitney Bowes	[illegible]	[illegible]
Polaroid	48[illegible]	49[illegible]
Procter & Gmbl	77[illegible]	78[illegible]
Providian	41[illegible]	42[illegible]
Pub Serv E & G	30[illegible]	30[illegible]
Quaker Oats	52[illegible]	52[illegible]
Ralston Purina	90	[illegible]
Raychem Corp	40[illegible]	40[illegible]
Reebok Intl	28[illegible]	29[illegible]
Reliastar Fin	39[illegible]	39[illegible]
Reynolds Metals	58[illegible]	59[illegible]
Rockwell Intl	51[illegible]	51[illegible]
Rohm & Haas	91[illegible]	91[illegible]
Royal Dutch	53[illegible]	52[illegible]
Rubbermaid	24[illegible]	24[illegible]
SBC Comms	72[illegible]	73[illegible]
Safeco Corp	47[illegible]	47[illegible]
St Paul's Cos	81[illegible]	81
Sara Lee Corp	54[illegible]	55[illegible]
Schering Plough	58[illegible]	57[illegible]
Schlumberger	73[illegible]	73[illegible]
Seagram	30[illegible]	30[illegible]
Sears Roebuck	41[illegible]	42[illegible]
Shell Trans	42[illegible]	42[illegible]
Sherwin Wllms	26[illegible]	25[illegible]
Silicon Graphic	12	12[illegible]
Snap-On Tools	43[illegible]	43[illegible]
Southern Co	25[illegible]	24[illegible]
Southtrust	58[illegible]	58[illegible]
Sprint Corp	55[illegible]	55[illegible]
Stanley Works	43[illegible]	44[illegible]
Sun Company	41[illegible]	41[illegible]
Sun Microsys	38[illegible]	37[illegible]
Suntrust	69[illegible]	69[illegible]
Supervalu	41[illegible]	41[illegible]
Synovus Fin	31[illegible]	31[illegible]
Sysco Corp	44[illegible]	44[illegible]
TRW Inc	53[illegible]	52[illegible]
TIG Hldgs	31[illegible]	31[illegible]
Tandy Corp	35[illegible]	35[illegible]
Temple Inland	50[illegible]	50[illegible]
Tenet Healthcare	31[illegible]	[illegible]
Tenneco	38[illegible]	38[illegible]
Texaco	53[illegible]	53[illegible]
Texas Instr	44[illegible]	44[illegible]
Texas Utilities	40[illegible]	40[illegible]
Textron	59[illegible]	59[illegible]
Thermo Elect	42[illegible]	41[illegible]
Time Warner	59[illegible]	59[illegible]
Times-Mirror A	59[illegible]	59[illegible]
Timken	34[illegible]	33[illegible]
Torchmark	39[illegible]	38[illegible]
Toys R Us	29[illegible]	29[illegible]
Transamerica	104[illegible]	104[illegible]
Travelers	51[illegible]	51[illegible]
Tribune	59[illegible]	59[illegible]
UST Inc	35[illegible]	35[illegible]
US Bancorp	107[illegible]	107
UAL	87	87[illegible]
[illegible]	62[illegible]	62[illegible]
US Inds	28	28
US West Comm	43[illegible]	44[illegible]
US West Media	27	27[illegible]
USAirways Group	59[illegible]	56[illegible]
USX Marathon	31[illegible]	31[illegible]
Unicom	30[illegible]	29[illegible]
Unilever NV	59[illegible]	58[illegible]
Union Camp	51[illegible]	51[illegible]
Union Carbide	42[illegible]	42[illegible]
Union Pacific	60[illegible]	61[illegible]
Unisys Corp	12[illegible]	12
USF&G Corp	21	20[illegible]
United Tech	69[illegible]	[illegible]
Unocal Corp	37[illegible]	37[illegible]
VF Corp	43[illegible]	43[illegible]
Wal-Mart Stores	37[illegible]	[illegible]
Warner-Lambert	123[illegible]	122[illegible]
Waste Mngmt	26[illegible]	27
Wells Fargo	325	320
Weyerhaeuser	48[illegible]	48[illegible]
Whirlpool	52[illegible]	52[illegible]
Whitman	25[illegible]	25[illegible]
Winn Dixie	42[illegible]	42
Witco Corp	[illegible]	39[illegible]
Woolworth	20[illegible]	[illegible]
Wrigley (Wm) Jr	77[illegible]	[illegible]
Xerox	69[illegible]	69[illegible]
Xilinx Inc	35[illegible]	34[illegible]

THE SUNDAY TIMES

WINNERS AND LOSERS OF '97

"For Lord Sainsbury, it was a year to celebrate, but at the other end of the high street it was a year Sir Bernard Ashley would rather forget"

Tomorrow, The Sunday Times reveals which business tycoons made and lost the most money during 1997

Business — The Sunday Times

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.64	2.46
Austria Sch	21.81	20.15
Belgium Fr	64.23	59.27
Canada $	2.529	2.335
Cyprus Cyp£	0.912	0.840
Denmark Kr	11.86	10.97
Finland Mkk	9.51	8.76
France Fr	10.37	9.59
Germany Dm	3.12	2.88
Greece Dr	493	454
Hong Kong $	13.76	12.56
Iceland	131	111
Ireland Pt	1.21	1.12
Israel Shk	6.29	5.64
Italy Lira	3081	2844
Japan Yen	231.23	213.70
Malta	0.684	0.625
Netherlds Gld	3.525	3.230
New Zealand $	3.01	2.77
Norway Kr	12.76	11.82
Portugal Esc	315.03	293.00
S Africa Rd	8.61	7.86
Spain Pta	261.79	243.00
Sweden Kr	13.77	12.67
Switzerland Fr	2.55	2.33
Turkey Lira	345832	325854
USA $	1.775	1.632

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Stiff fines for Keppel bribery

By Jon Ashworth

ONE of Singapore's biggest publicly traded companies has been heavily fined after admitting that it paid more than S$8.53 million (£3 million) in bribes to a Southampton shipping engineer in return for ship-repair contracts.

Keppel Corporation, in which the Singapore Government holds 31 per cent, made a series of payments to Cornelius van der Horst, former repair and technical manager at Petroleum Shipping, which operates from Southampton. Van der Horst, 56, was jailed for three years in January 1996 after an investigation by the Serious Fraud Office and Hampshire Police.

The affair poses an embarrassment to the Singapore Government. Its image was dented after the 1995 collapse of Barings, the UK merchant bank, after trading losses run up in Singapore. Controversy surrounded the 1997 general election and subsequent libel trial involving the Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, and Joshua Jeyaretnam, the Opposition leader.

Suspicions were raised when Keppel, which employs more than 14,000 people in South-East Asia, won the contract to perform maintenance on 27 Exxon ships in succession. Van der Horst pleaded guilty at Southampton Crown Court to three specimen charges of corruption.

Keppel is alleged to have paid Van der Horst 1 per cent commission on contracts in return for information about competitors' bids.

Keppel made no arguments in mitigation, but pleaded for leniency. Adrian Soon, a district judge, fined it S$300,000 (£107,000) on each of three charges of bribery, taking into account a further 14 charges.

Goh Chok Tong: controversy

هكذا من الأصل

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
AIB GOVETT UNIT TRUST LTD				
0171 378 7979 Dealing: 0171 407 7888				
Protected Funds				
UK Safeguard	138.05	144.96	+ 0.12	..
Do NAV to Mar 30	134.54	134.54		
UK Equity Safeguard	108.54	116.08	+ 0.70	2.47
Do NAV to Sep 19	105.85	105.85	− 1.08	
Cash	956.95	961.75	+ 0.00	5.75
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Gen	385.40	397.30	− 4.90	1.72
UK Small Cos	78.47	83.97	− 0.12	0.49
FTSE 250 Index	97.34	104.09	+ 0.57	2.11
Geared UK Index	2241.18	2365.94	−28.00	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	81.67	84.56	+ 0.09	..
Monthly Inc	41.75	44.69†	− 0.26	8.72
International Funds				
American Gen	284.30	301.30	− 0.50	
American Strat	221.60	228.99	− 3.63	
JG US Index	2251.75	2378.87	+19.00	4.00
European Gen	321.30	340.00	− 0.70	
European Strat	137.22	146.75	− 0.08	
Japan Gen	98.65	104.60	− 2.40	
Asia Pacific	65.94	70.23	− 0.34	1.08
Pacific Strat	103.85	111.06	− 1.02	
Greater China	194.38	207.89	− 2.75	
Latin America	103.79	110.35†	− 0.42	
Intl Growth	160.79	171.96	− 0.17	
Balanced Exempt	154.60	160.00		
Global Strategy	44.94	49.05	− 0.64	
AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS				
01203 553 231				
General Acc	827.50	880.30	− 4.70	2.58
General Inc	674.40	717.40	− 3.90	2.58
UK Growth Acc	571.70	608.10	− 3.70	2.55
UK Growth Inc	361.30	384.30	− 2.30	2.56
Higher Inc Acc #	1059.00	1120.00	− 6.00	4.87
Higher Inc Inc #	540.70	575.20	− 3.00	4.87
Gilts/Fxd Int Acc	233.20	246.30	+ 0.70	5.59
Gilts/Fxd Int Inc	97.12	102.60	+ 0.30	5.59
Nth America	404.20	429.90	+ 2.60	
Europe	437.60	465.50	+ 2.50	0.61
Brit Excell	113.90	121.10	− 0.50	2.30
Brit Fndmtls Acc	143.60	152.70	− 1.00	4.55
Brit Fndmtls Inc	92.12	98.00	− 0.61	4.55
Global Opps	106.80	113.60	+ 0.20	0.31
Balanced Acc	71.55	76.11	− 0.33	2.42
Balanced Inc	65.47	69.64	− 0.29	2.42
Japan Acc	31.68	33.70	− 1.21	
Pac Basin Acc	273.50	290.90	+ 0.60	2.30
ABBEY UNIT TST MGRS				
0345 717 373				
Gilts & Fixed Int	143.10	151.80†	+ 0.10	5.89
High Inc Equity	217.80	232.90	− 1.30	4.33
Worldwide Bond	271.70	288.20†	+ 0.90	3.48
American Growth	510.20	541.60	− 1.50	0.21
Asian Pacific	210.90	225.60	− 1.90	0.50
Assets & Earnings	334.70	358.00†	− 0.10	2.85
Euro Capital Acc	237.90	254.40	+ 0.30	0.78
Extra Inc	42.34	45.04†	+ 0.77	9.24
General	310.30	330.10	− 1.30	2.97
Global Opps	73.69	78.39	− 0.29	0.41
Japan	68.99	73.79	− 2.04	.
Managed Inc	51.47	54.75†	− 0.11	4.11
Mastertrust	179.80	192.30	− 0.90	1.15
US Emerging Cos	210.80	225.50	+ 1.50	
Ethical	89.06	94.74	+ 0.45	1.93
International	137.30	146.10	+ 0.50	0.60
Dividend & Growth	80.81	85.76	− 0.47	4.07
Global Gwth & Sec	78.18	83.44	− 0.07	2.42

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
COIF CHARITY FUNDS				
0171 588 1815				
Investment Inc	888.60	912.39	−15.89	3.81
Investment Acc	4319.26	4384.54	−76.42	
Fixed Int Inc	133.66	134.20		8.84
Fixed Int Acc	269.83	270.91	+ 2.70	8.51
CITY FINANCIAL UT MGRS LTD				
0171 556 8800				
Beckman Intl	98.40	103.47	+ 0.08	5.97
Beck Bio-Tech	38.03	42.19†	..	
Accra Ethical Tst	220.41	234.48†	.	0.52
City Fin Assets	87.20	91.57	+ 1.01	2.94
Cap Fin Intl	84.83	90.24	− 2.12	0.06
Fruits Hse Cap	367.88	391.36	+ 1.91	1.60
Buckley Yield Grth	139.76	148.15	− 2.25	...
Show Utilities	82.68	94.58†	− 0.14	3.55
CITY OF LONDON UNIT TST MGRS LTD				
0171 711 0771 Admin: 01277 227 300				
Emerging Markets	45.07	47.82	− 2.29	..
CLERICAL MEDICAL UT MGRS LTD				
0345 772 233				
American Gwth	94.38	100.40	− 0.92	.
Dragon Growth	44.87	47.98	− 0.50	1.65
Equity High Inc	112.69	119.24†	− 0.80	3.20
-do- Accum	170.09	179.98	− 1.21	3.20
Extra Income Inc	29.13	30.67	+ 0.16	6
Extra Income Acc	33.86	35.65	+ 0.19	6
European Gwth	79.38	84.00	+ 0.51	0.21
Evergreen	34.61	37.01	+ 0.16	.
General Equity	130.66	137.90	− 0.98	2.34
Japan Growth	30.59	32.54	− 0.87	.
Pedigree Gwth	79.31	83.92	− 0.57	1.50
Ped Sm Cos Inc	41.93	44.37	+ 0.19	1.34
-do- Accum	45.14	47.77	+ 0.20	1.34
Retirement Inc #	33.42	35.55	− 0.32	5.02
Special Sits	54.06	58.13	+ 0.03	2.43
UK & Overseas	65.33	69.13	− 0.27	0.51
COLONIAL UNIT TRUSTS (UK) LTD				
01634 898 000				
Balanced	80.05	83.38	− 0.47	3.59
Capital	97.91	101.98	− 0.74	1.95
High Income	56.88	59.25†	+ 0.30	6.36
Top 50	72.12	75.12	− 0.58	1.94
COMMERCIAL UNION TRUST MGRS LTD				
0181 686 9818				
PRESTIGE PORTFOLIO (PPT FUNDS)				
Income Funds				
Equity Inc	226.09	235.54	− 1.45	4.30
Long Gilt	51.33	53.43	+ 0.37	4.83
Monthly Inc Plus	59.33	61.81	+ 0.39	7.25
Preference Share	58.34	60.78	+ 0.38	6.41
Balanced Funds				
High Yield	163.53	170.36	− 0.92	5.86
Managed Fund	84.06	87.56	− 0.31	2.42
UK Growth Funds				
Smaller Cos	51.58	53.73	− 0.17	1.58
-do- Accum	61.88	64.26	− 0.19	1.58
UK & General	121.11	126.17	− 0.97	2.15
-do- Accum	162.30	169.08	− 1.30	2.15
UK Growth	241.86	251.96	− 0.25	1.56
International Growth Funds				
Europe Growth	261.68	272.61	+ 0.72	0.49
Far Eastern Gwth	90.80	94.59	− 2.08	0.30
Global Bond	71.57	74.56	+ 0.17	5.14
Japan Growth	80.24	83.59	− 2.80	
North Amer Gwth	293.87	308.15	− 5.15	.
Oriental Growth	55.32	57.63	− 0.82	0.85
Worldwide Growth	77.63	80.87	− 0.77	0.32
OTHER CU TRUSTS (NON PPT FUNDS)				

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Inc Port Acc	86.07	91.01†	− 1.54	3.33
Wwide Port	80.54	84.02	− 1.58	
LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MGRS) LTD				
Enquiries: 01222 448412 Dealing: 01222 683512				
Equity Dist @	724.50	724.50	− 2.80	2.04
-do- Accum @	1532.00	1532.00	− 6.00	2.04
Equity Income #	123.50	123.50	− 1.19	4.62
UK Tactical Allocn @	82.43	82.43†	− 0.69	5.24
European @	175.40	175.40	+ 0.50	0.15
Far Eastern @	150.00	150.00	− 2.90	
Fixed Interest @	59.11	59.11†	+ 0.37	7.24
Gilt @	99.26	99.26†	+ 0.41	5.91
Global Growth @	79.84	79.84	− 0.50	0.43

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
MERCURY FUND MANAGERS LTD				
Dealing: 0800 445522				
American	342.90	362.80†	−10.60	...
-do- Accum	365.70	388.00†	−11.40	..
American Opps	140.80	150.00	+ 0.30	..
-do- Accum	142.90	151.80	+ 0.30	..
British Blue Chip	119.50	127.40	− 0.90	2.59
-do- Accum	158.50	169.00	− 1.20	2.59
Cash	107.00	107.00	+ 0.10	6.91
-do- Accum	157.00	157.00	+ 0.10	6.91
Emerging Mkts	124.80	134.20	− 3.20	0.23
-do- Accum	126.50	136.00	− 3.30	0.23
European Growth	395.30	418.90	− 1.20	0.13
-do- Accum	431.40	457.20	− 1.30	0.13
General	701.30	747.70	− 5.40	2.15

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	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Intl Bond @	48.77	48.77	+ 0.15	4.98
Japanese @	50.43	50.43†	− 0.93	.
North American @	278.80	278.80	− 3.30	.
Pacific Growth @	75.69	75.69	− 0.92	0.90
Pacific Index @	30.94	30.94†	− 0.10	3.26
UK Index @	94.18	94.18†	− 0.43	2.60
UK Recovery @	135.90	135.90†	− 0.40	1.45
UK Smaller Cos @	178.40	178.40	− 0.10	1.19
US Index @	108.70	108.70†	− 1.40	0.72
European Index @	117.80	117.80	+ 0.20	1.02
Japan Index @	24.01	24.01	− 0.77	.
Worldwide @	108.90	108.90†	− 0.50	1.13
LINCOLN UNIT TRUST MGRS				
01452 371 500 Dealing: 01452 371 623				
Growth	69.28	73.02†	− 0.36	2.11
Income	80.51	86.70†	− 1.85	3.51

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
-do- Accum	1463.00	1559.00	−11.00	2.15
Global Bond	127.40	133.80	+ 0.20	4.86
-do- Accum	177.20	186.20	+ 0.30	4.86
Gold & General	119.90	128.00	+ 7.50	0.55
-do- Accum	123.20	132.50	+ 7.80	0.55
Govt Securities	101.10	104.20†	+ 0.50	5.10
-do- Accum	227.70	234.80†	+ 1.10	5.10
High Yield Bd	109.90	112.50†	+ 0.50	5.89
-do- Accum	124.80	127.90†	+ 0.60	5.89
Income	231.60	247.80†	− 1.90	3.64
-do- Accum	400.20	435.80†	− 3.40	3.64
Inc Portfolio #	127.90	135.70	− 0.80	4.81
-do- Accum #	145.00	154.00	− 0.80	4.81
Intl Opps	609.30	649.90†	− 2.80	0.78
-do- Accum	830.40	885.80†	− 3.80	0.78
Japan	129.10	137.70	− 3.20	
-do- Accum	132.60	141.40	− 3.20	..

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WONDERFUL LIFE 48
Building society Tessas bring joy to some

WEEKEND MONEY

HANGING ON 45
Rollercoaster markets do a loop-the-loop

Stock surfing for beginners

Thousands of people will have received a computer with access to the Internet as gifts. **Susan Emmett** tests financial sites

It has only been two days since you unwrapped that shiny new PC with a 56k modem and surfed your first wave on the *What's new? What's cool?* sites. But by now you may feel it is time to use the Internet for something which is actually useful.

There are *thousands* of Web pages devoted to investment and personal finance subjects providing an enormous reference library for *the small investor. In some cases* the information was previously available only to professionals.

But since the Stock Exchange *relaxed its rules in June, the* number of Websites offering prices has mushroomed. As the exchange charges for real-time information, Internet sites with up-to-the minute *valuations come at a cost while* those with prices on a 20-minute delay tend to be free.

Many of the sites offering market information also include other per*sonal finance services. But the* more established sites are usually of greater use for those seeking information on family finance.

So whether you are looking for a *pension or a mortgage, need more* information to manage your business or aspire to become a fund manager, here is where to find relevant information at the click of a *mouse*:

Yahoo!
http://finance.yahoo.co.uk

Yahoo!, *one of the first ports of* call for Internet beginners, expanded into financial services in October. True to Yahoo! tradition, this site is easy to use and *well presented. It dispenses with many of the services* offered by the more extensive sites but works well as a starting point and for quick reference. It is also completely free.

The site focuses on publishing prices on all stocks trading on the London Exchange with continuous 20-minute delayed feeds. Users also have access to all *stocks trading on* the Frankfurt Boerse and the Bourse de Paris with 15 and 30-minute feeds respectively.

Links are available to the US *(http://quote.yahoo.com) for* 15-minute delayed feeds on all trading stocks on the New York, Nasdaq and American Stock Exchange. Other features include news from *Reuters and the Press Association*, exchange rates, precious metal prices and company profiles.

Moneyworld
www.moneyworld.co.uk

Moneyworld services extend across a much wider range of personal finance products than most *sites*. As such, it is one of the most useful for those searching for information on mortgages, savings and pension funds. It also has more than 3,000 London Stock Exchange prices on a 20-minute delay and information on unit trusts and other funds.

As the first personal finance site, launched in 1995, it is clearly des*igned and easy to follow. If you are* new to the Internet and the world of personal finance, this site would suit you. As well as being well signposted, it also *explains* the basics of *finance* and includes a glossary of financial terms. Moneyworld *has links to other* personal finance Websites, with a brief description of each.

A current drawback is a lack of *portfolio management* featured on many similar sites. But this service will be introduced early in the new year and unlike their competitors it will be free of charge.

Interactive Investor International
www.iii.co.uk

Used by both home investors and independent financial advisers, this site has until now focused on collective investments. But a recent venture with *Dialog Corporation, the* online information company, will provide the site's 45,000 users with equity prices. From February, III will offer *real-time* prices from London, New York and Nasdaq.

The new pay-as-you-go service will include access to global news, stock quote graphs, market briefings *and stock market reports from* Standard & Poor's, for which investors are billed at the end of the month. Articles cost £1 each while company profiles are up to £5.

The current service features information on unit and investment trusts, data on offshore funds, Peps, mortgages and pensions. Users can also create a portfolio of funds they *wish to watch*.

But as the name suggest, this site is unique for its interactive quality. If professional advice is what you need, this service allows you to e-*mail questions to a panel of inde*pendent financial advisers. It will also let you know where you can find your nearest IFA. Conversely, *if you want to air your views, you* can head for the *chatroom* to swap ideas with other investors.

Electronic Share Information
www.esi.co.uk

Another veteran of cyber financial information, ESI is aimed at those with more than a passing interest *in stock market investments. ESI* has both share and share option prices and unit trust quotes. These are free on a 20-minute delay but real-time information comes at a *price. At £20 a month, the Silver* service combines unlimited access to real-time prices and portfolio management of ten personal port*folios* each containing up to 100 *shares*.

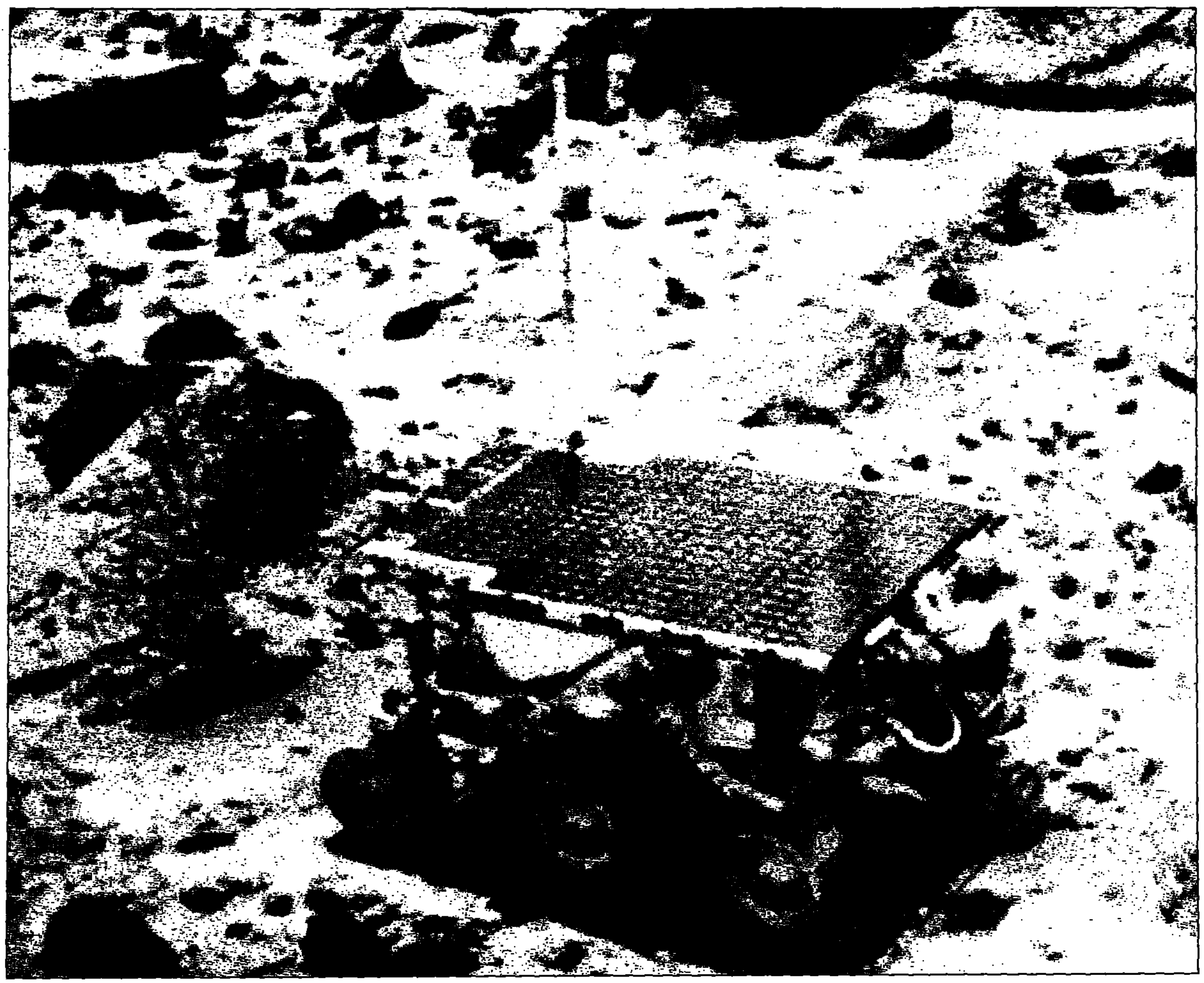
Additionally, ESI is one of the few to provide a "trading gateway" to execution-only brokers such as *Sharelink* or *Stocktrade. Option dealing* can be routed through Union CAL in the same way. But these services are available only to subscribers. There is little in the *free service or the* £5 *a month Bronze* service which cannot be found more conveniently packaged and easily accessible on other sites. ESI requires all users to register *which can dissuade* casual surfers.

Infotrade
www.infotrade.co.uk

Used both by private investors and businessmen, Infotrade is long-established and ESI's closest compet*itor. The site, owned by Mitsubishi* Electric, offers a mix of free and subscription-only services. But as one of the few regulated by the Securities and Futures Authority, access to any information is only available after trawling through a series of disclaimers which can be off-putting to newcomers. Another barrier is the need to register.

Those who persevere are offered free share prices with a 20-minute delay, mortgage information, an *online will-making' service and* insurance quotes for travel, home and motor cover.

For £14.10 a month, subscribers have access to company reports, *portfolio management* service for up to 20 portfolios each holding 40 stocks and online share dealing via Sharelink, Caterdeal and Stock*trade. But if you want unlimited* access to real-time prices, it will cost £11.75 per month.



Just as the Sojourner rover made light work of sending back data from Mars, a Website such as Yahoo!, below right, makes picking shares into an easy task for back-bedroom stockbrokers

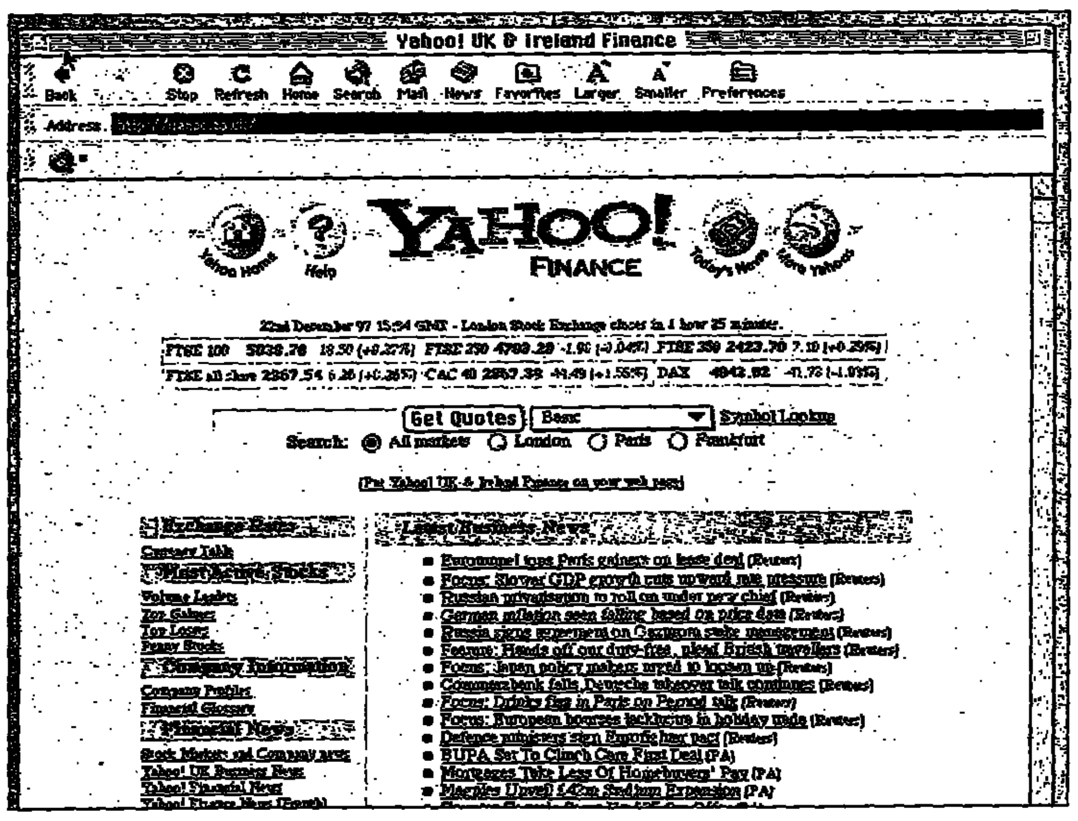
Market-Eye Premium
www.market-eye.co.uk

The Market-Eye site certainly stands out from the crowd. Not *only is the design slick, it puts the* sophisticated home investor on an equal footing with the City big boys by providing access to DataStream information. The site offers free share quotes for those who register.

But it is the more recent Premium service, launched last month, *which fuels the fantasies of back*-bedroom stockbrokers. For a fee, users are given real-time prices from the London Stock Exchange and information on *London International Financial Futures* Exchange (Liffe), investment trusts, foreign exchanges, the closing prices, graphics and real-time news.

The site is particularly useful for international investors as it lists 32,000 international share prices in up to 60 countries, including *all the markets in the European Union*. New York, Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore, Hong Kong and São Paulo are among the markets covered.

*Other highlights include a port*folio *management* facility with a daily e-mail valuation service and access to DataStream's vast historical database *which has been* providing *the* City with company reports since 1964. The introductory offer of £10 a month goes up to £20 at the end of this year.



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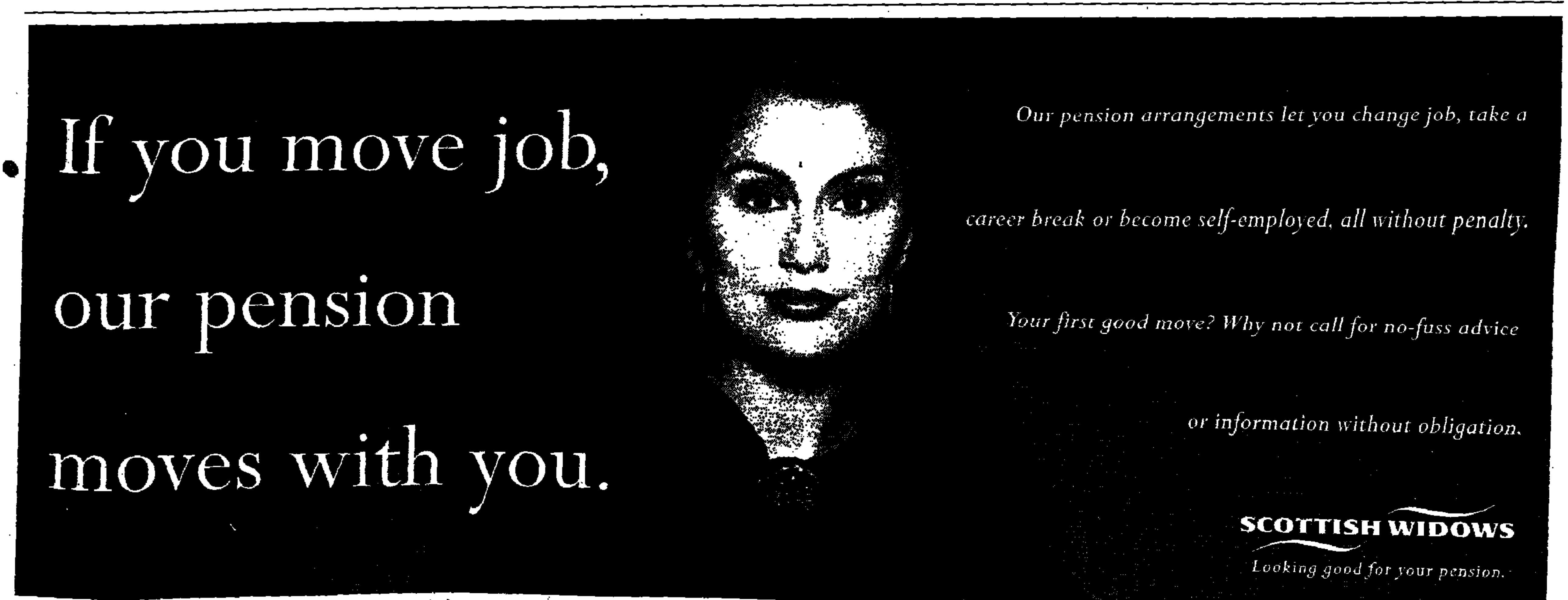

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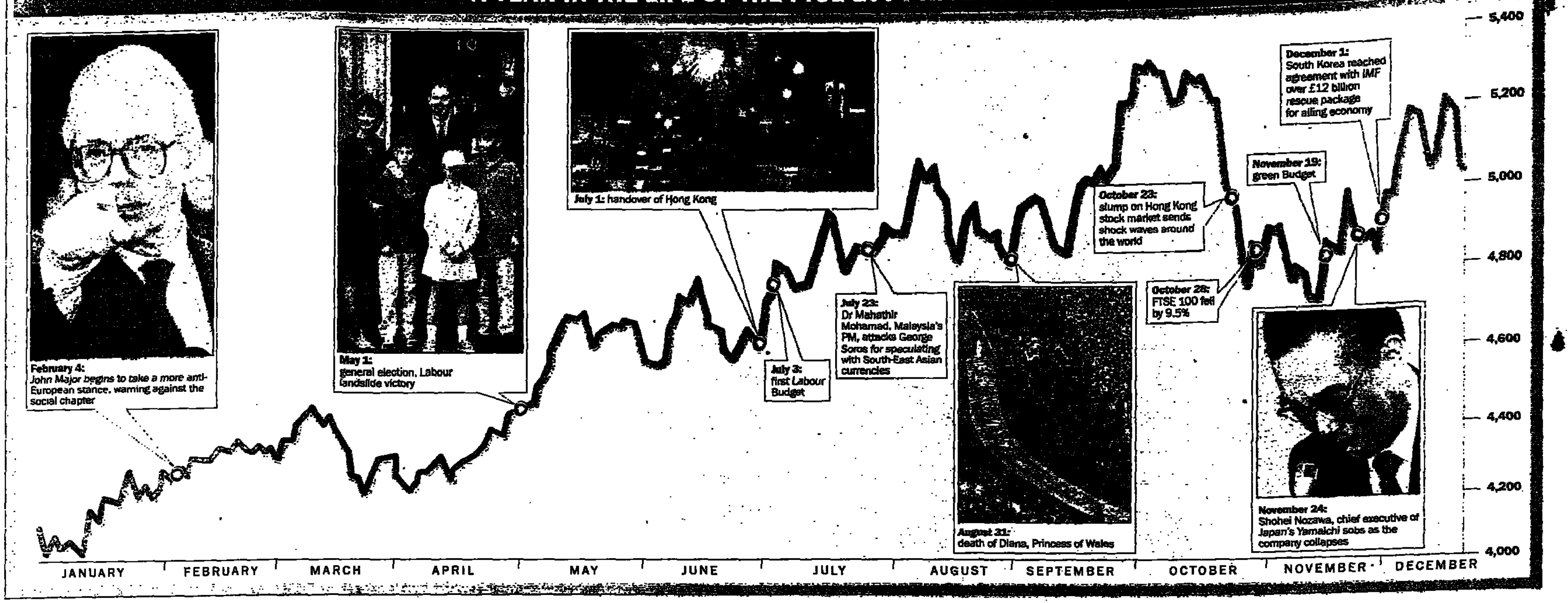
A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE FTSE 100 PRICE INDEX



Trackers refuse to be thrown off scent

Managed funds are failing to keep pace with their leaner rivals, says **Magnus Grimond**

It will take more than a few stock market wobbles and a meltdown in the Far East to deter investors in index-tracker funds, it would seem. Anecdotal evidence from fund providers suggests that small punters have remained unflinching in the face of the stock market's gyrations since October and have, if anything, increased their investments.

This insouciance certainly looks justifed in terms of past performance. The two and three-quarter years since Virgin set the industry alight with publicity lambasting the performance of managed funds has given some perspective to the brash claims of Richard Branson. So far, investors drawn by the promise of ultra-lean charges and performance to boot have seen the reality (largely) live up to the hype.

Index trackers have turned in a sparkling performance against their managed brethren over both one and three years, the periods during which the sector has started to motor. As our table shows, even the average fund tracking the FTSE 100 index has managed a very acceptable 22.5 per cent rise over the past year or so, rising to an extremely handy 68 per cent over three.

That is well ahead of the nearest managed rivals in the UK growth and income sector, the investment universe shared by both trackers and conventional unit trusts. The figures from Standard & Poor's Micropal show below average growth of 15.5 per cent over one year and slightly less than 56 per cent over three. Add in the fact that only 13 of 145 UK growth and income funds beat the tracker average over one year and only nine of 121 outperformed on a three-year view and one can be forgiven for wondering why any fund manager is still in a job.

The surprise is not so much the absolute performance of index trackers — after all, they have only had to come close to matching a FTSE 100 in robust good health this year to do well. More of a shock is the failure of managed funds to cash in fully on the market's gains, despite the alleged added value provided by their managers.

Investors have certainly not been slow to recognise the difference, pumping a record £1.23 billion into the sector in the ten months to October, compared with £434 million in the whole of 1996. Much of this is money reshuffled out of existing investments, observers say, suggesting that investors are wising up to the advantages of index trackers. But as our table shows, there is a surprising degree of divergence in performance, even within the index-tracking sector. Biggest is not always best.

Despite being one of the smaller providers, River & Mercantile (R&M) is ranked number three among FTSE trackers. Jonathan Harbottle, of R&M, says they aim to keep the fund's divergence from the index to no more than 0.18 per cent over 12 months. Yet the Micropal figures show R&M at least two percentage points adrift on its tracker over one year.

Mr Harbottle points out that straight comparisons with the index being tracked can be misleading. A number of factors, including charges, how closely the fund matches the index, the basis of dealing, how income is treated and the time that prices are taken, all make significant differences to the final valuation.

Charges are clearly crucial, with those groups — notably three of the clearing banks — still charging a management fee underperforming significantly. River & Mercantile, which pioneered index trackers with a unit trust team poached from James Capel in 1995, claims to be the lowest-cost provider for anyone with more than £2,500 to invest. The group levies a 0.5 per cent initial charge to cover stamp duty and 0.35 per cent of the value of the fund every year to cover management costs.

Mr Harbottle says: "We are aiming at professional investors and the more astute private buyers, who see that Gartmore, Virgin, HSBC etc are offering good value, and see that there is even better value at River & Mercantile."

The group's crown as cheapest provider is disputed by Legal & General, whose two UK funds — together totalling £885 million — make it one of the industry's most popular brand names. L&G makes no initial or exit charge and levies 0.5 per cent a year to cover management. Taking account of the fact that River & Mercantile does not offer a personal equity plan, Mike Hadyn, managing director of L&G's unit trust company, says that L&G's is the cheapest PEP tracker on the market. He questions the size and expertise of a relatively small provider like R&M, which has less than £35 million in its index-tracking fund out of a total of £190 million in unit trusts under management.

"We manage £25 billion and we would argue that scale is the key to running index funds. The bigger the funds, the lower the costs are going to be," he says.

L&G, which aims to track its indices to within 0.5 per cent in two years out of every three, claims sheer volume allows it to absorb many costs that are otherwise piled on to the investor. Both the stamp duty and the costs of "aggressive" marketing are absorbed with the 0.5 per cent annual fee on the assumption that they will be recovered over time.

"The argument for index tracking is so compelling that the response rate will be higher and we will get higher profits as a result," argues Mr Hadyn.

Despite charging more than both R&M and L&G, Virgin can already boast the largest single fund, even after less than three years in the index-tracking game. Not a company to hide its light under a bushel, Virgin claims its championing of the index-tracking cause has been the main factor in the product's new-found popularity. David Ramsbottom, marketing manager at Virgin Direct, says Virgin is about "providing a product for the majority of people. It is all about making it simple and straightforward."

The zero initial charge and 1 per cent management charge certainly fits that philosophy. The only niggle is Virgin's annoying £2 fee per investment if you invest less than £1,000 and a 0.5 per cent charge if you hold the fund for less than five years.

But these are nothing compared with the increasingly incongruous initial charges being levied by a few providers. Given that there is no need for expensive fund managers to run tracker funds, there would seem to be no justification for fees that match conventional unit trusts. However, Barclays is charging a chunky 5.25 per cent initial charge for its FTSE tracker and a further annual fee of 1.25 per cent.

John Kelly of Barclays Funds, the new name for the old Barclays Unicorn unit trust group, is hardly forthcoming with robust defences for these charges. "We don't promote these funds. They are used within funds of funds sold through the branch networks and the fees are rebated within them. They were created to meet the management and distribution expenses."

Even so, there appears to be a contradiction at the heart of the Barclays approach as it wrestles with sorting out its Byzantine unit trust structure. While promoting advisory management for the private investor to justify large fees, it also owns the largest index-tracking group in the world — Barclays Global Investment Managers. With a group of that calibre within the Barclays stable, it seems odd that the bank is not promoting its four tracker funds.

Perhaps the problem is, as Anne McMeehan of the Association of Unit Trust and Investment Funds says, that "people have used trackers as a marginal stepping stone to get out of building societies and into the tropical heat of managed funds".

The launch in 1999 of individual savings accounts, with their requirement for low costs and easy administration, should be a gift to tracker fund providers. But there may still be too many vested interests around really to get them off the ground.

Thought for the day

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What an odd year. Twelve months ago, stock market analysts found it hard to sound optimistic about 1997 prospects in the world's main stock markets, Tokyo excepted. Share prices had flown further ahead of their long-term trend. Interest rates looked set to rise in Britain and America. Continental Europe was stuck in a fiscal squeeze. Forecasts of profit growth were shrinking.

In the event, London, Wall Street and most continental markets have had a great year, prices rising between a fifth and a third. Instead of Japan finally climbing out of the valley of despair, however, it has been joined there by the rest of East Asia, other than China.

Profits are growing slower on both sides of the Atlantic and UK short-term interest rates have risen strongly. Other factors have driven asset prices further ahead. The most important has been the downtrend in long-term interest rates. Most investors reckon inflation will stay modest. So share ratings have pushed headily up, especially in New York.

Over there, thanks to the Federal Reserve, the economy continues to tread a confident path between over and underheating. That gave a solid basis for the rest of the world, until the Asian epidemic spread in autumn. Now America has to keep on the golden road while the third of the world economy relied on to be most dynamic faces a 1930s-style slump. The West must hope that the "tiger" economies will adjust rapidly where even Japan has failed.

The other boost has come from outperformance by many of the top shares that tend to dominate indices. In part that reflects the global approach of more fund managers. Many of these groups have also gained the benefit of past restructuring or started new rounds of mergers and cost-cutting. Many sprawling giants shrank their equity base by paying out lumps of cash.

In Britain and continental Europe, international mergers in defence and insurance are booked in advance. The infection will surely spread to other sectors as multinationals prepare for the euro and for global competition.

Having been sensibly cautious and mostly wrong a year ago, securities houses and fund managers are now cheerful about the London market. Most expect the FTSE 100 index to end 1998 between 5 and 20 per cent higher.

On average, however, big investors expect earnings and dividends to grow by about 7 per cent next year as the economy slows sharply. After a long bull market, you might think it hard to justify share prices rising faster than company earnings next year.

Western markets reacted robustly to Asian market turmoil in the autumn. But the FTSE is still 6 per cent off its October peak of 5,330. Do not presume further short-term growth unless and until it has surpassed that level. Meanwhile, if values turn down, those negative factors that are ignored in good times will figure more heavily in investors' minds.

Back home, economic growth may slow too far. And investors may decide that Labour is more hostile in office than they hoped in the innocence of spring. The windfall tax was shrugged off: the utilities index ends the year in line with the big company average. But monopoly utilities are still in line for when ministers need enemies.

Pep holders are to be doubly hit, by abolition of tax credits and by restrictions on the replacement savings vehicle. That £5 billion a year dividend tax on pension funds will really hurt profits if the stock market turns down and takes surpluses with it. Other tax reviews are due: do not expect favours.

As usual, new year is a time to take stock but not necessarily a good time to take investment decisions. If you want to gamble spare money on Far East markets, good luck. By all means take the plunge. Beyond that, private investors' best new year resolution would be to look after their own common interests better in a newly hostile world.

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Patrick Collinson looks back at a lively year in the markets

Hang on tight as we loop-the-loop

Rollercoaster is a word used too frequently to describe investment markets. By the end of 1997, rollercoasters were old hat — stock markets were doing a loop-the-loop.

Most investors should have enjoyed the ride. The total return on investing in UK shares over the past 12 months has been a stunning 22 per cent. Wall Street defied the doomsters with its continued rise, while merger mania helped European bourses to break one record after another. The unlucky investor was in Japan and the Far East, with many emerging markets submerging instead.

What's in store for 1998? The message from the experts is to keep your cash in UK shares. But if you are tempted outside the UK, go no further than Europe. Unwinding the problems in Japan and the Far East will take many more months if not years, while only the bravest are willing to commit money to Wall Street at the level that share prices have now reached.

Property could be the joker in the pack, with many predicting that UK commercial properties, particularly in the South, will outstrip returns from investing in shares.

The investment buzzword for 1998 is "shareholder value". Investors can no longer rely on economic growth to deliver stock market returns — the meltdown in the Korean and Thai markets has put paid to that notion. Instead, the experts are searching out companies and countries where the interests of shareholders — in the form of higher profits, dividends and share buybacks — take precedence over building corporate empires or maintaining market share at any price.

But it is worth remembering how spectacularly wrong the experts can be. For years investment managers have extolled the virtues of the Far East, based on economies growing at 8 per cent to 10 per cent a year. But the canny investors who ignored their calls and bought big US stocks instead would have enjoyed much fatter profits.

Weekend Money asked the experts to gaze into their crystal balls and make predictions for the year ahead.

■ **UNITED KINGDOM:** Economists broadly agree that the economy will slow in 1998, especially in the second half of the year, with growth at around 2 per cent to 2.5 per cent, compared with more than 3.5 per cent in 1997. Interest rates are also expected to nudge upwards, although the peak of around 7.5 per cent will be lower than in other periods. Despite this, profits and dividends are expected to grow at around 7 to 8 per cent, providing support for the stock market.

David Rough, Legal & General group director, investments, said: "We expect a FTSE 100 level of 5,500 by the end of 1998, but we also expect to see a bumpy ride up to that level. A rush to 5,500 early in the year would see us taking a defensive position." Big UK companies, particulary financial stocks in the FTSE 100, were the only investment game in town in 1997. Can their rise continue, or should the UK investor be buying smaller company shares?

Keith Wade, chief economist at Schroders, said: "We expect further bid activity in the new year, particularly among medium and smaller-sized companies." Fidelity adds that the mid-size company is its preferred investment in the UK, but admitted that "the market overall cannot be said to be cheap".

But Ken Forman, global strategist at Standard Life, thinks that big companies should continue to surge ahead. He said: "Smaller companies look cheap, but they may continue to look cheap. What is driving world stock markets is the trend towards global players. Big companies are becoming bigger. Banks could have another good year because, if you look at the European banking scene, not one has a large market share."

■ **EUROPE:** Second favourite after the UK for most investment managers is continental Europe. Economic growth is picking up, but inflation and interest rates remain low and the outlook for profits growth is good. A lot of merger activity is also expected before European economic and monetary union, currently on track for January 1999.

Unfortunately, much of the good news is already in the level of European share prices, which rose even more than the FTSE during 1997. Mr Wade said: "Europe remains the safe haven from the problems in Asia. There are a number of favourable developments which should support equity prices, including corporate restructuring."

Mr Forman says that despite recent mergers such as between Swiss banks UBS and SBC, there is still a long way to go. "European companies really are at an early stage of rationalisation. I think the mark will rise, but not enough to take the shine off the effect of reorganisation." Legal & General is a little more cautious. Peter Knapton, L&G Securities managing director, said: "The outlook is reasonable, but it won't go up in leaps and bounds. Restructuring will continue, but valuations are quite high."

■ **UNITED STATES:** The absence of British investors from the Wall Street boom is the big "mea culpa" of the UK investment industry. James Williams, chairman of Baring Asset Management's strategic policy group, said: "My colleagues in America unkindly suggest that when the British finally change their negative views on the US, the market will peak."

But there are no signs that the experts are capitulating and telling investors to buy US stocks. Fidelity, the biggest investment organisation in the US, and which also has a large presence in the UK, said: "There is no doubt that valuations remain stretched."

Mr Forman said: "Investors have got the US wrong for a long time and I admit I came out far too early. But I do wonder if profit margins are going to come under pressure next year, and I expect underperformance from the market, although not a crash."

■ **ASIA:** The crash began in Thailand, spread like wildfire through Malaysia and Indonesia and finally toppled South Korea, the biggest economy in the region after Japan. But a rapid bounce back is not expected.

Richard Urwin, Gartmore's head of macroeconomic research, says: "The Asian crisis could yet develop further. Perhaps the greatest risk concerns China, which has to date been relatively unaffected by the turmoil among its neighbours."

Schroders is also negative. Mr Wade said: "We feel it is too early at this stage to predict when a broader recovery will begin." However, Mr Forman added: "If currencies stablise there will be some recovery in confidence. It's a high-risk play, but I wouldn't be advocating going in yet."

■ **JAPAN:** When will the eight-year bear market in Japan finally bottom out. This time last year many investment professionals were tipping 1997 as the year of recovery in Japan. In the event, the market has gone from bad to worse, dipping below 15,000 at the year end, compared with 40,000 at the end of 1989.

Mr Forman says the pain could continue for another couple of years. He said: "I suspect it will recover a bit, but I believe it will be in a trading range for a few years. It will be in the long-term interest of the Government to let a number of companies go bankrupt. Rescuing them will not be the solution."

Japan is most affected by the Asian crisis because it sends 7 per cent of its exports to Korea alone. Schroders said: "We remain cautious on the market due to worries over the financial system and a deteriorating economic environment. Corporate earnings are likely to disappoint rather than surprise on the upside and we expect the market to remain volatile."

Mr Knapton said: "It's going to get worse before it gets better. The bad debt problem is enormous. A new low could be established, below 14,500, but at the year end it could be between 16,000 and 18,000, which would be a good recovery if you get your timing right."

BROKERS' FORECASTS

The FTSE-100 next December

Broker	Level
BZW	5,700
Goldman Sachs	5,350
HSBC James Cp	5,400
Kleinwort Ben	5,600
Merrill Lynch	5,400
NatWest Mkts	5,700
SBC Warburg	6,000
UBS	5,600
Dec 24, 1997	5,013

Welcome to the People's New Year

COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH

Personal Finance Editor

Those for whom shopping is not therapy but torture have every excuse today not to go to the sales. They can, with justification, plead poverty. In the new year, almost everyone will be worse off. Our finances have been attacked by a combination of tax and interest rate rises. The next Budget is likely to contain further blows to the wallet, including possible national insurance increases.

To date, the Government has attempted to introduce its tax rises in a surreptitious fashion, although it has not always been successful in suppressing bad publicity. True to his pledge not to raise income tax rates, Gordon Brown has ensured that the effect of the cuts to various concessions cannot be seen in wage packets. But households will still see their incomes shrink, as they pay out more for pensions and see savings tax breaks cut.

The phasing-out of tax relief on profit-related pay which begins next month is a more overt tax change, clearly visible on payslips (see page 48). The million-plus employees affected by the reduction, who will each lose an average of £20 a month, will reflect that at least Kenneth Clarke tended to operate in a more upfront fashion than his successor. Meanwhile, Mr Clarke, who announced the ending of this relief in his 1996 Budget, will himself doubtless enjoy the embarrassment to Labour of his tax timebomb.

Most of the 3.7 million workers in profit-related pay schemes will not be compensated by their employers for the shortfall in their earnings. For those who are homeowners, lower earnings will coincide with more expensive mortgages. The new rate of mortgage tax relief will add £11 to the cost of the average loan. At the same time, the millions of borrowers whose loan rates are adjusted once a year are likely to see their repayments rise by about £50 a month.

In the light of these extra costs, few will have the spare cash to make the extra pension savings made necessary by Mr Brown's abolition of pension tax credits. This was his most devious move to date. But, as advance corporation tax numbs even the nimblest brains, few will have understood the implications for their pensions of Mr Brown's tinkering with the rules. Most will not realise that they should have raised their contributions until it is too late.

However, the meaning of Mr Brown's other savings tax measure was far clearer. His plan to replace Peps and Tessas with individual savings accounts (Isas) could be interpreted in only one way: as a disincentive to save. Fortunately, the public outcry has ensured that the Isa proposals will be remodelled. Those who hold out little hope even for the revised version should take a fresh look at the Tessa. She has grown generous in her final months, with no liposuction of her rates expected.

Unit and investment trusts tipped for top

How can small investors take advantage of the forecasts for investment markets in 1998? Weekend Money asked Graham Hooper, director at Chase de Vere Investments, one of the biggest investment advisers in the UK, to pick his top unit trusts and investment trusts for 1998.

UNITED KINGDOM

Schroder UK Enterprise unit trust. Fully Pepable.
"I believe that sterling's strength will continue to affect big companies, which tend to generate a large part of their profits from overseas. Therefore, I'm very keen on the smaller companies which make up most of Schroder UK Enterprise. It's got a very good fund manager, Jim Cox, who is relatively sanguine on UK equities and has a brilliant track record. It's also not expensive to buy."

Perpetual Income unit trust. Fully Pepable.
"I recommend this for an investor who wants income rather than growth. Fifteen months ago a lot of investment advisers began wondering if performance had gone off the boil, but the manager, Neil Woodford, has answered his critics and shoved performance down their throats. I expect it to do well again in 1998."

EUROPE

Fidelity European unit trust. Fully Pepable.
"EMU is politically almost inevitable, and a single currency will mean lower investment risk and volatility for UK investors. The trust is widely diversified and I like the manager, Anthony Bolton, who is an excellent value investor. At 3.25 per cent it has a relatively cheap initial charge, and Fidelity also offers a phasing option for anyone worried about market levels at the moment."

UNITED STATES

Henderson American Capital & Income investment trust.
"You can't ignore the US and you should have a toe in it, but you don't want to take on the risk of buying with Wall Street at these levels. One way around it is to buy the capital shares of this trust, which had a wind-up date of February 28, 1999. It has only 15 months more life and it is well covered. The way the trust winding-up will work, even if the US stock market contracts by 2.5 per cent per annum, it will still give investors 18.9 per cent. If the market stays at these levels, it will give 22.7 per cent."

JAPAN

No selection.
"I am a pessimist on Japan, and if we saw 12,000 on the Nikkei I wouldn't be surprised. The Government still has not addressed the structural problems in the financial sector, and there are more problems on the horizon. Investors ought not be too exposed to Japan. If you still want a Japanese investment, I would take Perpetual's Japan trust managed by Scott McGlashan, who approaches the market with a pessimistic view."

FAR EAST

HSBC Hong Kong Growth.
"I am still very worried about South-East Asia and Korea, and I still think there are things to come out of the woodwork. I normally prefer to recommend regional trusts with a spread of countries, but not this time. Currently I prefer HSBC Hong Kong, but if you do want a spread, then Schroder Far East has got about the best selection of investments."

BALANCED

Fidelity Triple Performance. Fully Pepable.
"For a diversified Pep which has the advantages of putting your investments across many different regions, I am currently recommending Fidelity's Pep, which has half in the UK, 25 per cent in Europe and 25 per cent in the Far East."

PATRICK COLLINSON

The Index-Tracking PEP

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A glance at the table will show that – since its launch two years ago – this Index-Tracking PEP from Legal & General has proved that it offers PEP investors superb value for money.

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NOV 95 TO DEC 97

	ANNUAL CHARGE	GROWTH
Legal & General	0.50%	43.72%
Dresdner RCM	1.00%	42.53%
Gartmore	1.00%	42.33%
Virgin	1.00%	41.35%
Average UK Income & Growth Trust	—	32.92%

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Tel. No. Home Tel. No. Work

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Legal & General

*Source: Micropal/LGIM, on an offer to bid basis based on all PEP charges with gross income re-invested from 01.11.95 (since launch) to 01.12.97. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. From 06.04.99 tax credits will no longer be able to be reclaimed by PEPs investing in equity based unit trusts. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs investing wholly in unit trusts. Full written details are available on request. All statements are correct as at 01.12.97. The Government published a consultative document in December 1997 on proposals for Individual Savings Accounts (ISA's) to be launched in April 1999. The terms and limits for converting an existing PEP into an ISA are being considered as part of the consultation. Legal & General (Direct) Limited. Registered in England No. 2702080. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name.

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Some festive cheer for housebuyers

Christmas may not be the obvious time to go househunting. But now could be your best chance of actually finding somewhere you want to buy — especially if you live in London or the South East.

For most of this year, would-be buyers have been thwarted by a serious shortage of good property. Any desirable home in a good area was snapped up immediately. Greedy sellers and unscrupulous estate agents took advantage of intense competition to gazump existing buyers and accept higher offers from others.

Demand pushed up prices, in turn tempting many potential sellers to hold back and wait for further rises. London saw rises of up to 40 per cent in some areas during 1997.

But now supplies of properties and numbers of people wanting to buy them are swinging back into equilibrium. Buyers, particularly in expensive parts of the country, are starting to jib at high prices as mortgage costs rise. Sellers are realising that house price rises will almost certainly slow next year. Housing analysts are predicting a rise of around 5 per cent in house prices next year, compared with up to 12 per cent in 1997.

Hilary Wade, of Winkworths, the London estate agent, says: "Availability is up and we expect it to improve. Next year should be steady and buyers should start looking now."

The sooner they start, the more likely they are to beat off rivals armed with fat bonuses from a good year in the City. According to Ms Wade, some are already looking, and not just in the million-pound bracket. "They're looking at a whole range of things. They're looking in Fulham, Notting Hill, Islington, Battersea, Wandsworth."

Buyers outside London and the South East may have more of a problem finding what they want, however. Ian Perry, of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, says there is still a shortage of good property in sought-after areas. "All through the year there has been a supply problem. It has improved but there's still a problem, except in the South East. Elsewhere, there are lots of people looking but they can't find anything they want."

See page 39 for Halifax house price predictions.

SARA MCCONNELL

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at June 19, 1997

	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.45
	5,000	AIG Life	6.26
	10,000	GE Fin Ass	6.75
	20,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
2 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	6.00
	3,000	ITT Lond & Ed	6.10
	5,000	AIG Life	6.17
	10,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
3 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.75
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.30
	20,000	Hambro Assured	6.45
	50,000	Hambro Assured	6.55
4 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.80
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.15
5 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.86
	10,000	Hambro Assured	6.30

Source: Chamberlain de Broë 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

SAVERS BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Woolwich 0800 222200	Card Saver	Instant	£50	7.00	Yly
C & G 0800 742437	Inst Transfer	Inst(B)	£1,000	7.25	Yly
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200	Direct Access	Postal	£2,500	7.15	Yly
Alliance & Leic BS 0845 6088860	First Cls Inst	Postal	£10,000	7.50	Yly

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bristol & West 0800 202121	Postal 30	30 day p	£10,000	7.80	Yly
Northern Rock 0500 505000	Select 90	90 day p	£10,000	7.90	Yly
West Bromwich BS 0990 143668	Direct 90	90 day p	£25,000	8.00	Yly
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Base Plus	1 year	£ 2,001	8.00	OM

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Melton Mowbray BS 0800 731 7385		5 year	£1,000	7.90	Yly
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505		5 year	£3,000	7.85	Yly
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Premier+feeder	5 year	£9,000	7.85	Yly
Mansfield BS 01246 202055 2		5 year	£500	7.75	Yly

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	Visa	0.64%N	7.90%N	Nil
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%N	Nil
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829100	MastercardVisa	1.00%	14.00%	£12

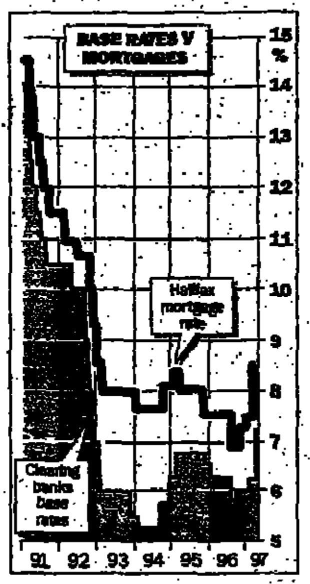
PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

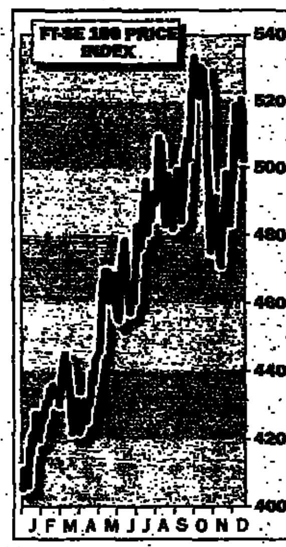
PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Direct Line 0181 680 9966	12.80%A	£183.75	£166.38
Capital One Direct 0800 216252	12.90%	£189.48	£166.54
BoS (Banking Direct) 0800 805805	12.90%	£191.55	£166.60

NB. A = Minimum age 22 years, B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System, C = no interest free period, N = Introductory rate for a limited period, OM = Interest paid on maturity, P = By Post Only

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)





NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates 20%	40%	Min/maximum investment £	Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c¹	2.00	1.60	1.20	10-10,000**		0645 645000
Investment A/c*•	4.75	3.80	2.85	1-499***	1mth	0645 645000
Income Bond*•	6.75	5.40	4.05	2,000-25,000***	3mth	0645 645000
First Opt Bond•	6.75	5.40	4.05	1,000-20,000***		0645 645000
44th Issue Cert†‡	5.35			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Children's Bond†	6.75			25-1,000	1mth	0645 645000
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					0645 645000
Capital Bonds•	6.65	5.32	3.99	100-250,000	8day	0645 645000
11th Ind Linked†‡	2.75			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Pensns Bond S3•	7.00	5.60	4.20	500-50,000‡	60day	0645 645000

¹ first £70 (£140 jt) of int tax free, inst accs for up to £100 * Unlimited additional holdings for reinvested proceeds †Tax free *Rates gross and vble ‡Guaranteed when held for 5 years •0.2% net bonus for £20,000+ ¶£100,000 jt in addition to S1 and S2 holdings • Taxable but cred in full ‡£500-100,000 earn higher rates **Tiered rates apply.

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Sun Life ....Level	£ 8,922	£10,049	£11,569
Sun Lf of Can......Level	£ 8,914	£ 9,978	£11,423
Standard Lf ....Level	£ 9,044	£10,136	£11,564
Comm Union ......Level	£ 8,592	£ 9,902	£11,822
Canada Life ....Level	£ 8,784	£ 9,885	£11,381

SINGLE LIFE	Female: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Equitable Lf........Level	£8,176	£ 8,909	£ 9,971
Generali ....Level	£7,941	£ 8,879	£10,164
Sun Life ....Level	£8,097	£ 8,911	£10,086
Sun Lf of Can.......Level	£8,154	£ 8,919	£10,032
Canada Life ....Level	£8,071	£ 8,904	£10,111

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male: Age 60 Female: Age 55	Age 65 Age 60	Age 70 Age 65
Equitable Lf..........Level	£7,807	£8,384	£ 9,197
Sun Lf of Can.......Level	£7,760	£8,360	£ 9,203
Sun Life ....Level	£7,659	£8,261	£ 9,072
Standard Lf ....Level	£7,604	£8,254	£ 9,152
Prudential ....Level	£7,694	£8,248	£ 8,909

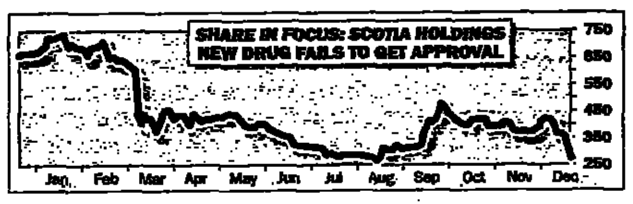
Source: Annuity Direct (0171 684 5000)

Statistics compiled by Jackie Stradling

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	123.50	7.590	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.625%	153.25	7.590	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	171.25	7.590	100.20	10,000
Britannia	13.000%	170.75	7.610	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	158.50	7.650	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	154.00	7.630	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	180.00	7.430	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	144.25	7.450	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.625%	168.50	7.490	100.45	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	174.00	7.400	100.48	1,000
PERPETUAL SUBORDINATED BONDS					
Chelt & Gloucester	11.750%	159.75	7.360	100.98	50,000
Halifax	8.750%	116.50	7.510	100.62	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	152.50	7.870	100.28	50,000
Halifax	13.630%	186.00	7.330	100.00	50,000
Bristol & West	13.380%	175.50	7.620	100.34	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	166.25	7.590	100.14	1,000

PIBS=Permanent interest-bearing shares. Source NatWest Markets



Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Chelsea 0800 291291	5.39	£20k-150k	80	Fixed to 1.2.20
Nationwide 0800 302010	5.75	to £300k	90	2.35% discount for 2 years
Britannia 0800 526350	5.74	No min or max	80	Fixed for 2 years
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 months 3% disc-6 mths
Northern Rock 0845 6050500	3.99	to £250k	75	Fixed to 1.2.20.

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Scarborough 0990 133149	0.99	£15-100k	95	7.45% dsc-6 mth 2%-6mth,0.5%-1y
Nottingham Imper. 0115 9817220	0.75	£25-150k	75	Fixed at 0.75% to 31.1.98
Leeds & Holbeck 0800 216121	1.20	to £180k	95	7% dsc - 6 mth, 1% dsc - 6 mth
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 mths, 3% dsc-6 mth
Northern Rock 0845 605 0500	3.99	to £250k	75	Fixed until 1.2.20

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Newbury 01635 43676	4.85	£30-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year
Mansfield 01246 202055	2.20	£25-250k	90	6% discount-6 mth Further dsc apply
Clay Cross 01246 862120	5.25	£15-100k	95	3% discount for 12 months
Banks				
Bnk of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mths 3% disc 6 mths
Bristol & West 01908 343400	3.49	£15k+	95	Fixed to 1.1.99

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Blay's Guides Ltd (01753 880482)

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UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE

	Bid	Offer	Wkly +/-	Yld %
AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh, EH12 9SE 0131 339 9191				
Balanced	562.80	595.60	- 0.20	...
UK Equity	790.90	837.00	+ 2.70	...
Property	456.20	482.80	+ 0.40	...
Fixed Interest	371.20	392.90	+ 1.20	...
Money	282.60	299.10	+ 1.90	...
International	423.40	448.10	- 7.60	...
ABBEY LIFE Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AL 01202 292373				
Custodian S4	216.50	227.90	- 0.80	...
Ethical S4	177.40	186.80	+ 0.50	...
International S4	214.80	226.20	- 1.90	...
Protected Gth S4	131.40	138.40	+ 0.10	...
Asian Pacific	145.90	153.60	- 1.10	...
European S4	262.20	276.00	+ 0.20	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	448.80	472.50	- 0.10	...
Equity Ser 4	310.00	326.40	- 1.80	...
Man Ser 4	847.30	891.90	- 3.20	...
Conv Ser 4	370.00	389.50	+ 0.40	...
Money Ser 4	369.60	389.10	+ 0.40	...
Fixed Int Ser 4	446.70	470.30	+ 0.50	...
American Ser 4	820.50	863.70	- 2.30	...
High Inc Ser 4	972.90	1024.20	- 4.40	...
Indexed Int Ser 4	259.00	272.70	- 0.20	...
Japan Ser 4	216.10	227.50	- 6.10	...
ALBANY LIFE 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AJ 01707 42311				
Equity Fd Acc	2219.50	2336.30	-11.60	...
European Fd Acc	557.90	587.20	- 1.10	...
Fixed Int Acc	631.20	664.30	+ 1.30	...
Gtd Money Acc	376.30	396.00	+ 0.20	...
Intl Managed Acc	802.50	844.70	- 3.00	...
Int Fxd Int Acc	380.70	400.70	+ 0.50	...
Japan Fund	195.70	206.00	- 4.50	...
N American Acc	497.60	523.70	- 9.50	...
Prop Fd Acc	517.80	545.00	+ 0.40	...
Multiple Inv Acc	1335.10	1405.30	- 6.50	...
ALLIED DUNBAR ASSURANCE Swindon SN1 1EL 01793 514514				
Ful Int Dep Acc	422.60	444.90	+ 0.20	...
Equity Acc	1897.20	1997.10	- 6.80	...
Property Acc	745.00	784.30	+ 0.50	...
Far East Acc	234.40	246.80	- 5.10	...
Managed Capital	661.10	695.90	- 1.70	...
-do- Acc	1449.30	1525.60	- 3.60	...
Overseas Acc	1393.90	1467.30	- 7.80	...
Gilt Edged Acc	627.00	660.00	+ 1.70	...
Amer Equity Acc	1339.60	1410.20	+ 0.10	...
Amer Man Acc	553.50	582.70	+ 0.50	...
Amer Prop Acc	117.20	123.40	+ 0.80	...
Distribution Bonds	28.00	29.50	..	...
AXA EQUITY & LAW LIFE ASSURANCE Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Bucks 01494 463463				
Reserve Ser 6	190.90	200.90	+ 0.20	...
Balced Ser 6	958.10	1008.50	- 3.40	...
Opportunity Ser 6	219.00	230.50	- 0.30	...
Distribution Ser 6	114.10	120.10	- 0.10	6.14
UK Equities Ser 6	1489.20	1567.50	- 8.60	...
Higher Inc Ser 6	1571.60	1654.30	- 8.10	...
North Amer Ser 6	664.10	699.00	+ 3.70	...
Far East Ser 6	428.50	451.00	- 5.90	...
Europe Ser 6	567.60	597.40	+ 2.80	...
Intnl Ser 6	689.40	725.60	- 1.20	...
Property Ser 6	630.60	663.80	-14.00	...
Fixed Int Ser 6	537.50	565.70	+ 1.30	...
Ind-Lnkd Sec Se	223.20	234.90	- 0.10	..
Gteed Dep Ser 6	357.30	375.00	+ 0.40	..
BARCLAYS LIFE 252 Romford Road, London E7 9JB 0181 534 5544				
Equity Acc	1268.70	1335.50	- 6.80	...
-do- Initial	752.20	791.80	- 6.40	...
Gilt Edged Acc	500.10	526.50	+ 1.80	..
-do- Initial	299.10	314.90	+ 0.20	...
International Acc	456.00	480.10	- 5.60	...
-do- Initial	271.00	285.30	- 4.20	.
Managed Acc	697.90	734.70	- 4.70	...
-do- Initial	416.20	438.20	- 4.00	...
Money Acc	327.80	345.10	+ 0.30	...
Property Acc	345.60	363.80	- 0.20	...
-do- Initial	206.80	217.70	+ 0.10	...
America Acc	466.40	491.00	- 7.80	...
Far East Gwth	165.60	174.40	- 2.90	..
Financial Acc	576.10	606.50	- 4.90	...
500 Accum	547.10	575.90	- 1.80	...
Japan Acc	169.80	178.80	- 6.60	...
Income Acc	739.20	778.20	+ 3.30	...
Special Sits Acc	389.60	410.20	+ 2.60	...
Univ Tech Acc	193.90	204.20	- 2.10	...
BLACK HORSE LIFE Mountbatten House, Chatham, Kent ME4 4JF 01634 834000				
The Managed Fd	1063.96	1063.96	-14.47	...
Income Fund	1088.33	1145.62	-18.91	...
Extra Income	986.34	1038.26	-18.53	...
Worldwide Gth	601.30	632.95	-10.92	...
Balanced Fund	954.40	1004.64	-11.45	...
Smllr Cos Recov	1102.24	1160.26	+ 2.19	...
N Amer & Genrl	561.06	590.58	- 9.36	...
Pacific Basin	272.34	286.68	- 7.57	...
German Growth	304.13	320.14	- 3.56	...
Japan Growth	125.59	132.20	- 7.48	...
The UK Gth Fd	308.96	325.20	- 3.90	..
Contl Euro Gth	190.92	200.97	- 1.45	...
Property Fund	449.36	473.02	+ 0.79	...
Fixed Interest	418.92	440.97	+ 2.37	...
Cash Fund	319.03	335.83	+ 0.21	...
Managed Inv	630.46	663.65	- 9.08	..
Nth Amer Recov	370.07	389.55	- 1.79	..
Abtrust Fund				
Managed Grth	399.18	420.19	-10.97	..
BRITANNIA 50 Bothwell St, Glasgow G2 6HR 0141 248 2000				
Measured Perf	222.30	235.20	- 1.10	...
Performance Plus	244.30	258.40	+ 0.70	...
With Profit Perf	199.40	211.50	+ 0.10	...
UK Opportunity	301.00	318.40	- 2.00	...
Euro Opportunity	309.00	326.90	...	...
North Amer Opp	295.20	312.40	+ 3.10	...
Far East Opp	164.40	174.00	- 3.10	...
Gwth Prop Ser 1	178.80	188.20	...	...
Gth Prop Ser 2	217.40	230.00	+ 0.20	...
Fixed Int	259.00	274.10	+ 0.40	...
Cash	178.60	188.80	+ 0.10	6.49
Overseas	281.50	297.90	+ 0.90	...
Formerly LAS				
Managed Fund	465.60	490.20	- 2.20	...
UK Equity	910.40	958.40	- 5.90	...
Property	300.00	315.80	+ 0.20	...
Money Market	282.90	297.80	+ 0.10	...
Fixed Interest	376.30	396.20	+ 0.60	...
Japan	242.00	254.80	- 6.30	...
North America	262.70	276.60	+ 2.70	...
International	435.00	457.90	+ 1.97	...
European	395.20	416.00	...	...
Far East	121.90	128.40	- 2.10	...
CANADA LIFE 24 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA 01707 51122				
Managed	434.30	457.20	- 6.00	...
Property	294.50	310.10	- 0.60	...
Gilt & Fxd Int	299.90	315.70	+ 1.20	...
Equity	551.00	580.00	- 8.10	...
Cash	241.40	254.20	- 0.10	...
CLife Euro Mgd	506.60	533.30	- 9.70	...
CLife Intl Fd	350.30	368.70	-11.20	...
Managed Fund	927.30	976.10	-12.80	...
Property Fund	596.10	627.50	+ 0.30	...
Equity Fund	1359.70	1431.30	-20.00	...
Gilt Edged Fd	773.60	814.30	+ 3.10	...
Deposit Fund	372.90	392.50	+ 0.20	...
Investment Fd	608.80	619.20	- 8.00	...
International	557.40	586.70	-17.90	...
CITY OF WESTMINSTER ASSURANCE Sentry House, 500 Avebury Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 2NU. 01908 606101				
Property Fund	211.40	222.60	+ 5.60	...
Managed Fund	844.70	889.20	-18.80	...
Equity Fund	534.50	562.70	-15.60	...
CLERICAL MEDICAL/FIDELITY INVESTMENTS Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH. 0117 9290566				
Assurance Funds				
Sapphire Mixed	378.10	398.10	- 1.70	...
Ruby	202.40	213.10	- 1.00	...
Emerald	175.30	184.60	- 0.50	...
Equity	476.30	501.40	- 2.90	...
Property	257.60	271.20	+ 0.80	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	261.00	274.80	+ 1.10	...
Indexed Secs	206.60	217.50	+ 0.50	...
Cash	210.60	221.70	+ 0.20	...
Nth American	367.20	386.60	- 1.40	...
Far East	212.40	223.60	- 4.40	...
International	278.40	293.10	- 1.50	...
Special Sits	519.20	546.60	- 0.70	...
Intl Income	443.00	466.40	- 2.00	...
European	496.90	523.10	+ 1.60	...
Japanese	87.60	92.30	- 2.10	...
SE Asia	301.50	317.40	- 2.60	...
With Profits Reg	198.80	209.30	+ 0.30	...
-do- Spec	198.80	209.30	+ 0.30	..
Flexible Retirement Plans Funds				
Mixed	446.50	470.10	- 2.80	...
Equity	604.00	635.80	- 5.50	...
Property	244.50	257.40	+ 0.90	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	344.70	362.90	+ 1.90	...
Index Linked	223.50	235.30	+ 0.60	...
Cash	292.90	308.40	+ 0.40	..
Nth American	453.50	477.40	- 2.40	...
Far East Acc	225.40	237.30	- 4.20	...
International Acc	342.00	360.10	- 2.30	...
Special Sits	779.20	820.30	- 1.10	...
European Flex	709.60	747.00	+ 1.30	...
COLONIAL MUTUAL GROUP Colonial Mutual House, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4YY. 01634 890 000				
(Units) Key ‡	273.96	...	...	...
-do- Pacemaker ‡	430.07	...	...	...
-do- Cash	226.63	238.56	+ 0.09	...
-do- Equity	750.60	790.58	- 2.76	...
-do- Fxd Int	452.20	476.00	+ 1.06	...
-do- Managed	536.30	564.53	- 1.49	...
-do- Property	420.73	442.87	+ 0.01	...
(Pens): Cash Cap	219.62	231.19	+ 0.07	...
-do- Cash Inv	357.79	376.63	+ 0.25	...
-do- Equity Cap	1964.88	2068.30	-15.18	...
-do- Equity Inv	3200.99	3369.47	-21.43	...
-do- Fixed Cap	485.98	511.56	+ 1.23	...
-do- Fixed Inv	791.71	833.39	+ 2.33	...
-do- Index Cap	233.66	245.97	- 0.07	...
-do- Index Inv	380.66	400.71	+ 0.04	...
-do- Mngd Cap	772.60	813.27	- 4.12	...
-do- Mngd Inv	1258.64	1324.89	- 6.21	...
COMMERCIAL UNION St Helen's, 1 Undershaft, EC3 0171 283 7500				
Var Ann Acc (5) ‡	1153.53	...	...	...
Var Ann (5) ‡	125.61	...	...	...
Prime Managed	530.60	558.60	- 1.00	...
Prime UK Equity	725.30	763.50	- 2.30	...
Prime Int Equity	330.90	348.40	- 0.50	...
Prime Property	275.50	290.00	+ 0.70	...
Prime Fxd Int	284.60	299.60	+ 0.90	...
Prime Index-Lnk	205.80	216.70	...	...
Prime Cash	231.80	244.00	+ 0.20	...
CONFEDERATION LIFE Lytton Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2NN 01438 744840				
Managed Fund	1458.90	1535.60	-11.70	...
Equity II	2310.30	2431.80	- 6.30	...
EAGLE STAR LIFE ASSURANCE Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, GL53 7LQ. 01242 221311				
Life Funds				
Ut Wth Pfts (5/ed) ‡	118.90	..	+ 0.10	...
Secure (2) ‡	112.50	...	+ 0.10	...
Managed (3) ‡	127.80	...	- 0.30	..
Equity Mngd (3) ‡	126.20	...	- 0.50	...
Adventurous (3) ‡	115.30	...	- 0.30	...
Bristol & West (2) ‡	114.40	...	+ 0.10	...
Equity Mgd S1	307.10	323.30	- 1.20	...
Managed S1	308.40	324.70	- 0.80	...
Adventurous S1	234.20	246.60	- 0.70	...
Managed (2)	209.40	220.50	- 0.60	...
Eagle/Mid Uts	405.20	419.90	- 1.20	0.01
Pension Funds				
Unit With Pfts (5) ‡	119.60	...	+ 0.20	...
Secure (2) ‡	113.60	...	+ 0.10	...
Managed (2) ‡	127.30	...	- 0.40	...
Equity Mngd (2) ‡	127.80	...	- 0.50	...
Adventurous (2) ‡	111.60	...	- 0.40	...
Bristol & West (2) ‡	115.80	...	+ 0.20	...
FRIENDS' PROVIDENT Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH 01722 413366				
Managed	412.90	434.70	- 2.00	...
UK Equity	590.80	621.90	- 3.80	...
Stewardship	491.70	517.60	- 0.70	...
Overseas Equity	368.10	387.50	- 1.70	...
North American	239.30	251.90	...	...
Pacific Basin	125.90	132.20	- 1.90	...
European	371.90	391.50	+ 0.40	...
Property	207.00	217.90	...	...
Fixed Interest	302.80	318.80	+ 0.30	...
Index Linked	204.80	215.60	- 0.10	...
Cash	226.80	238.80	+ 0.10	...
FP Life Assurance ex NM				
Fixed Interest	670.80	706.10	+ 5.90	...
Managed	936.40	985.60	-66.50	...
Deposit	387.80	408.20	- 0.40	...
Property	577.50	607.80	+ 0.10	...
American	657.50	692.10	-11.80	...
Australian	635.20	668.60	+ 5.40	...
European	891.00	937.80	+ 4.70	...
Income Acc	1088.10	1145.30	- 9.20	...
-do- Dist	577.30	607.60	- 6.20	4.25
International	391.10	411.60	- 2.70	...
Japan Smaller	237.80	250.30	- 7.20	...
Singapore & Mal	275.80	290.30	- 3.40	...
Tokyo Fund	330.00	347.30	- 6.10	...
UK Equity	836.10	880.10	- 9.20	...
CCM Vangd Mg	997.00	1049.40	- 1.60	...
GT GLOBAL FUND MGMT LTD Alban Gate, 14th Flr, 125 London Wall, Lond EC2Y 5AS. 0171 710 4567				
GT Plan Far East	237.90	250.50	- 1.70	...
GT Plan Wwide	592.60	623.80	- 0.20	...
GAN LIFE & PENSIONS Gan House, Harlow, Essex CM20 2EW. 01279 626262				
Portfolio Acc	830.10	830.10	+ 0.50	...
-do- Inv A	830.00	873.80	+ 0.50	...
UK Equity	574.20	604.50	+ 2.60	...
Gilt Plus	245.30	258.30	+ 0.90	...
Managed	379.20	399.20	+ 0.30	...
GENERAL ACCIDENT 2 Rougier St, York YO1 1HR. 01904 628982				
Managed	274.80	289.10	- 0.90	...
Unitised Profit	169.60	178.50	+ 0.10	...
UK Equity	425.70	448.00	- 1.90	...
Fixed Int	239.30	251.80	+ 0.50	...
Index-Linked	198.90	209.30	...	...
Cash Deposit	195.80	206.00	+ 0.10	...
Property	200.60	211.10	...	...
International	209.90	220.80	- 1.60	...
American	268.90	282.90	+ 1.00	...
Japan	164.80	173.40	- 5.40	...
Japan Smllr Cos	168.70	177.50	- 5.60	...
European	257.90	271.30	+ 1.60	...
Pacific Fund	197.30	207.60	- 1.60	...
Conv Life	176.70	185.90	+ 0.20	...
Formerly Provident Mutual				
Managed Ord	627.80	660.80	- 3.00	...
Managed Initial	383.30	403.50	- 1.40	...
Equity Ord	1076.60	1133.30	- 4.80	...
Equity Init	657.40	692.00	- 3.30	...
I-Linked Gilt Ord	242.50	255.30	...	...
I-Linked Gilt Init	154.70	162.80	...	...
Overs Equity Ord	428.60	451.20	- 0.50	...
Overs Equity Init	261.70	275.50	- 0.40	...
Property Ord	311.80	328.20	+ 0.10	...
Property Init	190.40	200.40	...	...
Fixed Int Ord	350.10	368.50	+ 0.70	...
Fixed Int Init	213.80	225.10	+ 0.50	...
Deposit Ord	233.70	246.00	+ 0.20	...
Deposit Initial	142.70	150.30	...	...
GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE Royal Exchange London EC3. 0171 283 7101				
Ass Prop Bds	960.30	1010.30	...	...
Managed Initial	575.80	606.10	- 4.00	...
-do- Acc	879.40	925.70	- 5.80	...
Equity Initial	964.40	1015.10	- 8.60	...
-do- Acc	1472.90	1550.50	-12.70	...
Fixed Int Initial	321.60	338.40	+ 1.40	...
-do- Acc	795.70	837.60	+ 3.00	...
Intl Initial	487.90	513.60	- 4.40	...
-do- Acc	745.20	784.50	- 6.50	...
Nth Amer Initial	283.60	298.60	- 3.30	...
-do- Acc	394.30	415.00	- 4.30	...
Pacific Initial	143.20	150.70	- 2.90	...
-do- Acc	197.10	207.50	- 4.00	...
Property Initial	198.00	208.40	...	...
-do- Acc	301.90	317.80	...	...
Index-Lnkd Init	184.30	194.00	+ 0.20	...
-do- Acc	276.20	290.70	+ 0.40	...
Deposit Initial	209.50	220.60	+ 0.10	...
-do- Acc	320.00	336.90	+ 0.30	...
Euro Initial	141.30	148.80	- 0.40	...
-do- Acc	181.60	191.10	- 0.50	...
HALIFAX LIFE LTD PO Box 285, York YO1 1YB 01904 611110				
Life Funds				
Foundation	34.22	36.02	- 0.10	...
Balanced	33.94	35.73	- 0.10	...
Opportunity	33.95	35.74	- 0.15	...
Deposit	26.70	28.11	+ 0.05	...
Pension Funds				
Foundation S2	26.51	27.91	- 0.18	...
Balanced S2	26.72	28.13	- 0.21	...
Opportunity S2	25.84	27.20	- 0.36	...
Deposit S2	25.11	26.43	+ 0.03	...
HAMBRO ASSURED Harbour House, Portway, Preston, Lancs PR2 2PR. 01772 840000				
Managed	223.50	235.20	- 3.40	...
-do- Pens	290.70	305.90	- 5.40	...
UK Equity	257.00	270.50	- 4.10	...
-do- Pens	316.00	334.70	- 6.30	...
International	168.80	177.60	- 6.20	...
-do- Pens	185.90	195.60	- 7.90	...
Deposit	157.10	165.30	+ 0.10	...
-do- Pens	193.10	203.30	+ 0.10	...
HILL SAMUEL LIFE NLA Tower, Addiscombe Road, Croydon 0181 686 4355				
Security Fund	786.30	832.10	+ 2.60	...
British Fund	835.00	883.60	- 2.60	...
International	689.00	729.20	- 0.10	...
Dollar Fund	652.80	690.80	- 1.60	...
Capital Fund	654.60	692.70	- 1.80	...
Income Fund	1044.80	1105.70	- 3.70	...
Property Series A	570.70	604.00	...	4.70
Property Units	953.50	1001.20	...	...
Financial Fund	1005.80	1064.40	- 7.50	...
Managed Ser A	728.10	770.50	- 0.90	...
Managed Units	1317.70	1387.10	- 1.40	...
High Yield Fund	943.80	998.80	- 5.40	...
Money Series A	327.20	346.30	+ 0.10	...
Money Units	438.80	461.90	+ 0.20	...
Equity Fund	836.10	884.80	- 2.00	...
Fixed Interest	478.40	506.30	+ 1.70	...
Indexed Secs	224.90	238.00	+ 0.30	...
European Fund	1062.60	1124.50	+ 4.20	...
Natural Res	242.60	256.80	+ 1.70	...
Far East Fund	451.00	477.30	- 3.40	...
Smaller Cos	686.40	726.40	...	...
Special Sits	724.20	766.40	+ 1.90	...
Man Currency	291.10	308.10	...	...
Japanese Tech	223.90	237.00	- 3.70	...
US Smaller Cos	518.00	548.20	+ 7.30	...
Formerly Target Life Assurance Co. Ltd				
Deposit	279.00	293.70	...	...
Financial Ser 1	80.00	84.30	- 0.70	...
Fixed Interest	401.90	423.10	+ 1.60	...
Gold	63.40	66.80	+ 0.90	...
Managed	800.30	842.50	- 1.70	...
Mngd Growth	256.00	269.50	- 0.50	...
Property	396.10	417.00	...	...
Residential Prop	125.10	131.70	...	...
TSB American	376.40	396.30	- 1.10	...
TSB Brit Gwth	1289.70	1357.60	- 3.50	...
TSB European	395.40	416.30	+ 1.20	...
TSB Income	609.50	641.60	- 2.60	...
TSB Intl	528.20	556.00	+ 0.20	...
TSB Pacific	322.60	339.60	- 2.80	...
IRISH LIFE ASSURANCE Irish Life Centre, Victoria Street, St Albans, Herts AL1 5TF. 01727 [illegible]				
Global Managed	752.50	792.10	-12.70	...
Global Property	341.80	359.80	...	...
Global Fixed Int	650.50	684.70	- 1.50	...
Global Equity	817.40	860.40	-16.60	...
Global Cash	241.30	254.10	+ 0.10	...
LEGAL & GENERAL UNIT ASSURANCE 2 Montefiore Road, Hove, Sussex BN3 1SE 01273 824000				
B Soc Lnkd Init	134.80	141.90	...	...
-do- Acc	202.60	213.30	+ 0.10	...
Brit Opps Init	198.20	208.70	- 0.50	...
-do- Acc	269.20	283.40	- 0.80	...
Cash Initial	173.10	182.30	+ 0.10	...
-do- Acc	326.20	343.40	+ 0.10	...
Equity Initial	914.00	962.20	- 5.70	...
-do- Acc	1721.80	1812.50	-10.80	...
Fixed Initial	400.80	421.90	+ 1.50	...
-do- Acc	755.10	794.90	+ 3.10	...
Index-Lnkd Gilt	152.50	160.60	+ 0.20	...
-do- Acc	245.20	258.00	+ 0.40	...
Intl Initial	328.50	345.80	- 2.10	...
-do- Acc	609.20	641.30	- 3.90	...
Managed Initial	579.40	609.90	- 1.70	...
-do- Acc	1091.50	1149.00	- 3.20	...
Property Initial	235.10	247.50	+ 0.50	...
-do- Acc	442.60	466.30	+ 1.00	...
LINCOLN The Quays, 101-105 Oxford Road, Uxbridge, Middx UB8 1LZ 01895 200 200				
Equity Units	£193.87	...	-53.00	...
Property Units	3269.00	3441.00	+ 3.00	...
Bal Bd Exec Unit	8498.00	8945.00	-18.00	...
2nd Equity Acc	913.30	961.30	- 2.70	...
2nd High Inc Ac	892.40	939.30	- 3.20	...
2nd Property Acc	293.10	308.40	+ 0.30	...
2nd Mngd 2 Acc	214.30	225.50	+ 0.20	...
2nd Mngd 3 Acc	589.00	619.90	- 1.30	...
2nd Mngd 4 Acc	267.80	281.90	- 1.10	...
2nd Deposit Acc	319.70	336.50	+ 0.10	...
2nd Gilt Acc	328.70	346.50	+ 1.00	...
2nd Amer Acc	1009.00	1062.00	+ 3.00	...
2nd Intl Mny Acc	246.30	259.20	+ 1.00	...
2nd Index Acc	247.20	260.70	+ 0.10	...
2nd Far East Acc	258.40	272.00	- 0.20	...
2nd Global Acc	176.30	185.50	- 0.70	...
2nd Euro Acc	218.00	230.30	+ 1.40	...
2nd Japan Acc	100.70	105.90	- 4.30	...
2nd Intl Cr Bd Acc	175.70	184.90	+ 0.70	...
2nd Cap Gth Acc	169.10	177.90	- 0.00	...
ex-Laurentian				
Property	634.40	657.20	+ 0.70	...
Managed	529.50	557.20	- 1.20	...
American	600.50	632.50	+ 2.00	...
UK Equity Fd	761.20	801.00	- 1.90	...
Japan	110.90	116.60	- 4.80	...
Index-Lkd	221.90	233.40	...	...
High Yield	1239.00	1305.00	- 4.00	...
Money	454.20	478.00	+ 0.20	...
International	396.20	416.90	- 1.60	...
Perpetual Active	377.10	396.90	- 0.40	...
Growth Acc	827.40	871.40	- 1.80	...
Gilt Edged	533.70	561.70	+ 1.40	...
European	199.80	210.20	+ 1.30	...
Far East	137.20	144.40	- 0.10	...
LONDON LIFE Spectrum, Bond Street, Bristol, BS1 3AL 0117 984 7777				
Equity ‡	1283.20	...	...	...
Fixed Interest ‡	552.00	...	- 2.60	...
Property ‡	507.00	...	+ 0.30	...
Deposit ‡	335.10	...	+ 0.20	...
Mixed ‡	773.90	...	+ 1.50	...
Indexed Stock ‡	272.90	...	+ 0.90	...
International ‡	312.60	...	+ 1.70	...
Equity A ‡	295.20	...	- 1.30	...
Fixed Int A ‡	243.00	...	+ 0.30	...
Property A ‡	221.90	...	- 0.10	...
Deposit A ‡	196.10	...	...	...
Mixed A ‡	252.50	...	- 0.30	...
Index Stock A ‡	212.30	...	+ 0.20	...
International A ‡	194.10	...	+ 0.60	...
Equity P ‡	1132.30	...	- 1.10	...
Fixed Int P ‡	765.40	...	+ 4.30	...
Property P ‡	384.30	...	+ 0.30	...
Deposit P ‡	405.00	...	+ 0.20	...
Mixed P ‡	742.50	...	+ 1.40	...
Index Stock P ‡	314.60	...	+ 1.10	...
International P ‡	324.90	...	+ 2.80	...
LONDON & MANCHESTER ASSCE Winslade Park, Exeter EX5 1DS. 01392 282456				
Inv Trust Cap ‡	619.40	...	- 8.60	...
-do- Acc ‡	1188.00	...	-16.00	...
Property Cap ‡	138.50	...	...	...
-do- Acc ‡	253.10	...	+ 0.20	...
Fxd Interest Cap ‡	215.50	...	+ 0.20	...
-do- Acc ‡	397.30	...	+ 0.60	...
Equity Cap ‡	411.00	...	- 7.10	...
-do- Acc ‡	772.40	...	-12.90	...
Internatl Cap ‡	236.70	...	- 4.60	...
-do- Acc ‡	439.30	...	- 8.50	...
Gtd Deposit Cap ‡	159.30	...	...	...
-do- Acc ‡	291.50	...	+ 0.10	7.20
Flexible Cap ‡	400.80	...	- 5.80	...
-do- Acc ‡	749.90	...	-10.40	...
Moneymaker Fd ‡	570.40	...	- 6.60	...
Capital Growth ‡	2506.00	...	-40.60	...
M & G Victoria Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1FB 01245 266266				
Amer Bond Acc	650.40	683.10	- 2.70	...
Amer Rec Bond	783.70	823.00	- 5.00	...
Am Smlr Cos Bd	323.30	339.50	+ 2.20	...
Australasia Bd	273.20	287.00	+ 0.30	...
Commodity Bond	308.10	323.60	- 2.00	...
Deposit Bond Acc	407.20	427.60	+ 0.20	...
Equity Bond Acc	2005.90	2106.30	-14.00	...
European Bd Acc	559.40	587.50	- 9.60	...
Extra Yld Bd Acc	1101.20	1156.40	+ 0.30	...
Gilt Bond Acc	557.00	585.00	+ 0.90	...
Gold Bond Acc	108.70	114.30	+ 1.00	...
High Yield Bond	444.00	466.30	- 0.60	...
Index-Lnk Gt Bd	247.80	260.30	+ 0.10	...
International Bd	849.90	892.50	- 8.10	...
Japan Bond Acc	142.60	149.80	- 5.10	...
Japan Sm Cos Ac	150.70	158.40	- 4.30	...
Managed Bonds	1126.00	1182.40	...	...
Prop Bond Acc	552.60	580.40	...	...
Rec Bond Acc	1064.40	1117.70	...	...
5 East Asia Bd Acc	239.00	251.10	- 2.60	...
MGM ASSURANCE MGM House, Heene Road, Worthing BN11 2DY. 01903 204631				
UK Equity	312.20	328.70	- 2.50	...
UK Equity Acc	490.00	515.80	- 3.70	...
Special Sits	130.80	137.70	- 0.70	...
Special Sits Acc	205.40	216.30	- 0.70	...
North American	268.70	282.90	- 1.00	...
N American Acc	421.80	444.00	- 1.50	...
Pacific Basin	255.10	268.60	- 3.70	...
Pacific Basin Acc	400.50	421.50	- 5.70	...
Fixed Interest	323.30	340.30	+ 0.50	...
Fixed Interest Acc	508.10	534.90	+ 1.10	...
Property	196.60	207.00	+ 1.00	...
Property Acc	309.00	325.30	+ 1.60	...
Deposit	156.50	164.80	...	...
Deposit Acc	246.00	259.00	+ 0.20	...
Managed	323.30	340.40	- 1.80	...
Managed Acc	467.60	492.30	- 2.20	...
MERCHANT INVESTORS St Bartholomews House, Lewins Mead Bristol BS1 2NH 0117 9266 366				
Property	490.10	494.80	+ 0.20	...
UK Equity	531.90	559.80	- 9.40	...
Gilt Edged	774.60	815.30	+ 4.10	...
Interest Fund	453.30	477.10	+ 0.30	...
Managed Fd	609.60	641.60	- 7.10	...
Intl Equity	692.90	729.30	- 9.40	...
North America	321.30	338.20	- 5.30	...
Far East	344.20	362.30	-10.70	...
Intl Currency	269.60	283.70	+ 1.90	...
NPI 48 Gracechurch Street, London EC3P 3HH 0171 623 4200				
Managed	635.50	668.90	- 1.00	...
UK Equity	936.00	985.30	- 0.30	...
Overseas Equity	521.90	549.20	- 0.90	...
Americas	597.60	629.30	+ 5.20	...
Far East	404.70	426.00	- 6.00	...
Property	246.70	259.60	- 0.30	...
Fixed Interest	487.00	512.60	+ 1.30	...
Indexed Gilt	285.20	300.20	+ 0.10	...
Deposit	246.20	259.10	+ 0.10	...
NAT WEST LIFE ASSCE LTD PO Box 888, Trinity Quay, Bristol BS99 5LJ 0117 940 4040				
Growth Mgd Pens	178.40	187.40	- 0.50	...
NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY - Ex NUAM Funds PO Box 148, Norwich NR3 1PP 01603 622200				
Managed Fund	1983.90	2088.30	- 7.90	...
Equity Fund	4699.90	4947.30	-32.70	...
Property Fd	744.20	783.40	+ 5.40	...
Fixed Int Fd	770.40	810.90	+ 4.60	...
Deposit Fund	400.20	421.30	+ 0.43	...
Intl Fund	306.70	322.80	- 1.00	...
OLD MUTUAL 2 Bartley Way, Hook, Hants RG27 9XA 01256 768888				
Equity Fund Acc	423.40	446.70	- 1.70	...
Fxd Interest Acc	308.60	325.60	+ 2.50	...
International Acc	291.30	307.30	- 2.20	...
Managed Acc	278.40	293.70	- 1.70	...
Property Acc	220.20	232.30	+ 0.10	...
Money Acc	173.10	182.70	+ 0.10	...
Spec Mkt Acc	222.20	234.40	- 0.60	...
Japan Equity Acc	68.90	72.70	- 1.50	...
N Amer Acc	244.40	257.90	- 3.90	...
Pacific Acc	94.20	99.40	- 1.30	...
European Acc	283.20	298.80	+ 0.10	...
PEARL ASSURANCE The Pearl Centre, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6FY. 01733 470 470				
Inv Prop Dist	144.40	152.10	+ 0.50	...
Prop Acc (Gross)	373.40	393.10	+ 1.40	...
Inv Equity	1839.50	1936.40	-13.20	...
Inv Managed	1170.40	1232.00	- 7.40	...
Res Managed	1347.90	1418.90	-20.80	...
PRUDENTIAL Holborn Bars, London EC1N 2NH 01189 578334				
Managed	474.90	494.70	...	...
PRUDENTIAL INDIVIDUAL LIFE FDS 1 Stephen Street, London W1P 2AP 0171 548 5288				
Managed Fund	1044.40	1099.40	+ 1.40	...
Equity Fund	2366.10	2490.70	-15.50	...
Ind Fund	737.20	776.10	- 1.80	...
Fixed Interest	701.10	738.10	+ 1.10	...
Property Fund	542.70	571.30	- 0.10	...
Cash Fund	411.80	433.50	+ 0.20	...
Pacific Basin	239.70	252.40	- 4.00	...
N American Fd	454.90	478.80	+ 4.80	...
Euro Fund	436.90	459.90	+ 4.40	...
Balanced Fund	206.40	217.30	...	...
Strategic Fund	231.80	244.10	+ 0.70	...
ROYAL HERITAGE LIFE ASSURANCE Peterborough Business Park, Peterborough PE2 6GG. 01733 390000				
Mult Grow (45) ‡	1019.20	...	...	...
-do- Acc	533.20	561.30	...	...
Op Prop	565.80	595.60	- 0.10	...
Op Equity	1415.50	1490.00	-25.90	...
Op High Yield	751.60	791.20	+ 2.30	...
Op Managed	1046.50	1101.60	-12.80	...
Op Deposit	442.40	465.70	...	...
Japan Smlr	114.50	120.50	...	...
Managed Gth	360.00	378.90	...	...
British	566.30	596.10	...	...
Global Bond	126.40	133.00	...	...
Gold Share	60.50	63.70	...	...
Japan	272.60	286.90	...	...
UK Smlr Cos	622.30	655.10	...	...
Mngd Growth	628.80	661.90	...	...
ROYAL LIFE INSURANCE New Hall Place, Liverpool L69 3HS 0151 239 3080				
Royal Life Unit Linked				
Managed Fund	509.60	536.40	- 6.60	...
SAVE & PROSPER 16-22 Western Road, Romford, Essex RM1 3LB. 01708 766966				
Bal Inv Fund	99.80	105.20	+ 0.10	2.34
Deposit Fund (4)	439.80	454.40	- 0.50	6.57
Gilt Fund	661.60	699.00	+ 2.40	7.45
Global Equity Fd	267.90	283.50	+ 1.60	...
Property Fund (46)	133.90	141.80	+ 1.60	6.69
AG Bond Fund	157.80	167.00	- 1.70	...
SCOTTISH AMICABLE 150 St Vincent Street, Glasgow 0141 248 2323				
Equity	860.60	905.90	-12.30	...
Fixed Interest	454.90	478.90	+ 1.70	...
Index-Linked	244.60	257.50	+ 0.40	...
International	496.50	522.60	-12.60	...
Property	344.30	362.40	...	...
Cash	258.60	272.30	+ 0.10	...
Managed	594.70	626.10	- 9.00	...
Cap Gteed Bd	177.10	186.40	- 4.40	...
95% Safeguard	104.60	...	...	...
100% Safeguard	104.60	...	- 0.10	...
Wealth Pres Cap	111.10	...	- 1.00	...
Wealth Pres Inc	24.90	...	+ 5.10	...
Bonus Bond ‡	67.60	...	- 2.60	...
SCOTTISH EQUITABLE 28 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YF 0131 556 9101				
Cash	205.64	216.47	+ 0.14	...
Index-Linked	202.80	213.50	+ 0.40	...
Fixed Interest	230.20	242.30	+ 1.10	...
Mixed	344.90	363.20	- 0.50	...
UK Equity	350.50	368.90	+ 0.50	...
International	316.70	333.50	+ 0.30	...
American	445.20	468.60	- 5.60	...
Japan	172.40	181.50	+ 0.80	...
European	396.20	417.00	+ 3.50	...
Pacific	271.40	285.60	- 0.80	...
Technology	552.50	581.60	+ 1.90	...
Frgn Bd/Crcy	244.60	257.50	+ 1.40	...
SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS 19 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YE 0131 225 2211				
Property	260.50	274.70	+ 0.30	...
UK Equity	547.10	576.00	- 0.30	...
American	381.30	401.50	+ 1.00	...
Pacific	216.00	228.60	- 3.10	...
European	656.50	691.20	+ 2.70	...
Global Mgd	345.70	363.90	- 0.20	...
Fixed Interest	303.10	319.20	+ 1.10	...
Index Linked	244.10	257.00	+ 0.70	...
Deposit	221.20	232.90	+ 0.20	...
Managed	380.20	400.20	- 0.50	...
Worldwide	126.10	132.80	- 1.80	...
Pen Worldwide	134.50	141.60	- 1.70	...
SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE 109 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5HN 0141 248 6321				
Flex Fund (35)	2343.90	2416.40	...	...
Sfety Fund	305.00	321.10	- 0.20	...
Growth Fund	309.60	325.90	- 0.80	...
Opportunity Fd	319.80	336.70	- 0.80	...
Cash Fund	196.30	206.70	+ 0.10	...
European Fund	508.20	535.00	+ 2.70	...
Gilts & Fxd Int	265.80	279.80	+ 0.20	...
Index-Linked Fd	227.10	239.10	- 0.20	...
International Fd	313.00	329.50	- 0.90	...
North American	378.90	398.90	- 3.70	...
Property Fund	138.70	146.10	...	...
UK Equity	366.80	386.20	- 1.50	...
UK Smaller	319.40	336.30	+ 0.20	...
SCOTTISH PROVIDENT 6 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YA 0131 556 9181				
Mixed	360.80	379.50	- 3.20	...
Equity	417.70	439.80	- 1.40	...
International	321.20	338.20	- 1.00	...
Property	267.60	281.70	+ 0.20	...
Fixed Interest	314.00	330.70	+ 0.90	...
Index Linked	224.80	236.80	- 0.40	...
Cash	208.60	219.70	+ 0.10	...
Formerly Prolific				
Bal Gwth Mngd	1071.80	1140.30	- 3.20	...
Cash Fund	380.90	401.40	+ 0.50	...
Property Fund	346.40	365.10	...	...
Equity Fund	1077.20	1146.00	- 3.10	...
Fxd Interest Fund	619.40	652.70	- 1.60	...
International	457.30	486.50	- 0.90	...
High Income	1060.10	1127.80	- 3.30	...
Far East	433.20	460.90	- 3.50	...
North American	888.30	945.00	+ 4.20	...
Special Sits	958.20	1019.40	...	...
Technology	1039.20	1105.60	+15.60	...
Extra Income Fd	578.20	615.20	- 1.40	...
Gilt Fund	556.50	592.50	+ 0.50	...
European	216.20	230.10	+ 0.90	...
Adventurous Mg	256.30	272.00	- 0.50	...
Secure Mgd	197.00	207.60	...	...
Equity Inc Dist	153.30	161.60	- 2.60	4.18
Managed Dist	134.20	141.50	- 0.10	4.75
Henderson Investment Bonds				
UK Equity Fd	443.40	471.80	- 5.80	...
North America	526.70	560.40	- 8.90	...
Far East Fund	416.80	443.50	-22.00	...
Global Managed	580.60	617.70	- 9.10	...
Deposit Fund	256.80	270.40	+ 0.30	...
Prime Residential	148.10	155.90	+ 0.10	...
European Fund	377.40	401.50	- 8.50	...
Fixed Interest	62.30	66.20	+ 0.30	...
SCOTTISH WIDOWS PO Box 902, Edinburgh EH16 5BU 0131 655 6000				
Inv Pol 1	1314.30	1384.30	...	...
Inv Pol 2	1248.60	1314.40	...	...
Inv Pol 3	1175.30	1237.30	...	...
Inv Cash	358.10	377.00	...	...
Mixed Fund	600.40	632.10	+ 0.70	...
Equity Fund	789.60	831.30	+ 2.00	...
Property Fund	296.00	311.70	+ 0.70	...
International Fd	557.40	586.80	- 6.60	...
Fixed Interest Fd	482.00	508.40	+ 2.00	...
Indexed Stock Fd	244.00	257.00	- 0.40	...
Cash Fund	259.80	273.60	+ 0.20	...
SKANDIA LIFE Skandia House, Portland Terrace, Southampton SO9 7BX 01703 334411				
Managed Acc	510.40	537.20	-18.80	...
Equity Acc	699.80	736.60	-12.60	...
International Acc	376.10	395.80	-13.30	...
Property	258.30	271.80	+ 0.10	...
STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE CO Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH1 2DH. 0131 225 2552				
Cash	304.00	320.00	+ 0.20	...
Equity	1554.10	1635.90	-10.20	...
European	217.00	228.50	+ 1.40	...
Far East	138.00	145.30	- 2.20	...
Fixed Interest	508.00	534.80	+ 2.30	...
Index Linked	260.60	274.30	+ 0.30	...
International	668.10	703.30	- 3.20	...
Managed	943.80	993.50	- 3.80	...
Nth American	224.30	236.20	- 3.50	...
Property	429.00	451.60	+ 0.40	...
Pensions				
Cash	492.40	518.60	+ 0.40	...
Equity	2420.90	2548.40	-14.50	...
European	297.90	313.60	+ 1.10	...
Far East	103.40	108.90	- 1.70	...
Fixed Interest	744.30	783.50	+ 4.20	...
Index Linked	377.40	397.30	+ 0.30	...
International	1003.30	1056.20	- 9.60	...
Managed	1418.10	1492.80	- 7.00	...
Nth American	315.30	331.90	- 0.30	...
Property	647.90	682.00	+ 1.10	...
Stock Exchange	312.20	328.70	- 2.00	...
SUN ALLIANCE St Mark's Court, Horsham, Sussex 01403 232323				
Managed Fund	962.40	1013.10	- 7.20	...
Equity Fund	1357.10	1428.50	-27.50	...
Fixed Interest Fd	512.60	540.40	+ 2.40	...
Index-Linked Fd	402.10	421.20	- 1.60	...
Property Fund	574.60	605.90	+ 0.80	...
International Fd	880.70	922.10	-14.60	...
N American Fd	468.10	486.40	+ 6.00	...
Far East Fund	190.70	200.70	- 2.20	...
Deposit Fund	341.00	359.60	+ 0.20	...
Intnl Bd ‡	611.90	...	-10.00	...
Worldwide Bond	169.10	178.00	+ 1.60	...
European	273.40	287.80	- 3.90	...
Phoenix Assurance				
Wealth Assured	974.70	1026.10	- 7.20	...
Ebor Phoenix Eq	695.00	732.60	-38.90	...
Property Growth				
Property Fund ‡	699.10	...	+ 0.60	...
-do- Acc ‡	644.90	...	+ 0.50	...
Agricultural Fd ‡	942.50	...	+ 0.60	...
-do- Acc ‡	896.30	...	+ 0.40	...
Abbey Nat Fd ‡	514.70	...	+ 0.30	...
Abbey Nat Acc ‡	536.10	...	+ 0.20	...
Investment Fd ‡	518.30	...	- 3.60	...
Investment (A) ‡	495.10	...	- 3.50	...
Equity ‡	2004.10	...	-38.60	...
Equity Acc ‡	1905.10	...	-36.70	...
Money Fund ‡	551.00	...	+ 0.40	...
-do- Acc ‡	525.00	...	+ 0.40	...
Actuarial Fd ‡	847.70	...	- 6.40	...
Gilt-Edged Fd ‡	491.80	...	+ 2.20	...
-do- Acc ‡	491.80	...	+ 2.20	...
Retire Annuity ‡	1466.30	...	+ 1.20	...
Immed Annuity ‡	301.00	...	...	...
Bldg Soc Life ‡	258.00	...	+ 0.20	...
SUN LIFE OF CANADA Basingview, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 2DZ Dealing: 01256 841414				
Growth Acc ‡	2189.60	..	+29.60	...
Managed Acc ‡	1171.60	..	+12.80	...
Equity Account ‡	1874.40	..	+31.50	...
Mngd Fund Acc	530.70	558.60	+ 6.00	...
Equity Fund Acc	806.00	848.40	+14.10	...
Prop Fund Acc	320.50	337.30	+ 0.40	...
Fixed Int Fd Acc	407.60	429.00	+ 0.10	...
Money Fund Acc	249.40	262.50	+ 0.20	...
Indx-Lnk Sec Ac	250.70	263.90	- 0.50	...
Pers Pens Acct ‡	2710.60	...	...	...
Pens Mngd Acct	1255.80	1321.90	- 4.30	...
Pens Guarantee	321.90	338.90	+ 0.60	...
Pens Equity	535.80	564.00	...	...
Pens Property	374.70	394.40	+ 0.90	...
Pens Fixed Int	404.10	425.40	- 5.70	...
Pens Intl	297.30	313.00	- 5.10	...
Pens Money	277.70	292.30	+ 0.50	...
Pens Indx-Linkd	250.00	263.20	+ 2.60	...
SUN LIFE UNIT St James Barton, Bristol BS99 7SL 0117 9426911				
Managed Acc	1169.20	1230.80	- 9.20	...
Property Acc	477.10	502.30	-14.20	...
Equity Acc	2177.70	2292.40	+ 0.60	...
Fixed Int Acc	524.90	552.60	- 2.30	...
Cash Acc	353.10	371.70	+ 0.20	...
Amer Equity Acc	602.10	633.80	-13.70	...
Japan Acc	175.00	184.30	-17.30	...
Pacific Acc	276.90	291.50	- 9.70	...
Far Eastern Acc	582.00	612.70	-35.50	...
International Acc	644.60	678.60	-24.30	...
Distribution Fund	339.80	357.70	+ 0.30	5.38
European	266.00	280.00	+ 1.10	...
Defrd Dist	232.30	244.50	+ 0.60	...
TSB LIFE LTD Charlton Place, Andover, Hants. SP10 1RE 01264 345678				
Managed Fund	375.40	395.20	- 2.10	...
Property Fund	247.10	260.30	+ 2.60	...
Fixed Interest Fd	279.20	294.00	+ 1.00	...
Money Fund	227.50	239.60	+ 0.30	...
Equity Fund	505.20	531.80	- 3.70	...
WINDSOR LIFE Windsor House, Telford, Shropshire 01952 292929				
Managed Bond	933.30	982.40	-19.40	...
Money Fund	359.60	378.50	+ 0.30	...
Equity Fund	912.70	960.70	-24.50	...
Fixed Interest	355.90	374.60	+ 0.90	...
Property Fund	465.20	489.60	+ 1.00	...
Gresham Framlington				
American & Gnrl	779.90	820.90	- 2.20	...
Income	1046.40	1101.40	-19.70	...
International Gth	731.40	769.80	-17.10	...
Capital Fund	808.30	850.80	- 1.40	...
Recovery Fund	535.80	564.00	-17.10	...
Japan & General	169.10	178.00	-16.70	...
Formerly [illegible]				
Life Funds				
Squirrel	20.48	21.55	- 0.02	...
Bear	27.49	28.93	- 0.18	...
Owl	29.81	31.37	- 0.75	...
Bull	23.87	25.12	- 0.51	...
Stag	22.73	23.92	- 0.67	...
Gilt Edged	23.49	24.72	+ 0.04	...
Deposit	17.66	18.58	+ 0.02	...
Pensions				
Squirrel	28.96	30.48	+ 0.04	...
Bear	41.01	43.16	- 0.35	...
Owl	43.48	45.76	- 1.40	...
Bull	32.89	34.62	- 0.87	...
Stag	31.09	32.72	- 1.16	...
Gilt Edged	31.64	33.30	+ 0.07	...
Deposit	23.75	25.00	+ 0.03	...
Pre 1982 Series				
3-Way Fund ‡		791.23	-15.54	...
1982 Series				
UK Equity	506.82	533.49	-13.62	...
N Amer Equity	418.70	440.73	- 7.64	...
Far East Equity	268.75	282.89	- 7.48	...
Fixed	375.62	395.60	+ 0.80	...
Cash Deposit	232.12	244.33	+ 0.25	...
Property	190.14	200.14	+ 0.47	...
Special Opp	440.65	463.84	-12.98	...
Managed	415.23	437.08	- 8.63	...
Index-Linked Fd	229.49	241.56	- 1.95	...
Formerly Crown				
Life Mngd Acc	775.00	816.70	-16.20	...
Life Fxd Int Acc	470.60	495.10	+ 0.90	...
Life Equity Acc	1204.30	1267.60	-32.50	...
Life Money Acc	338.00	355.70	+ 0.40	...
Life Inv Tst Acc	1020.50	1074.20	-21.30	...
Life Intl Acc	518.20	545.40	- 9.70	...
Life High Inc Acc	1182.70	1244.90	-18.80	...
Life Property Acc	299.20	314.90	+ 0.70	...
Brewin Equity	913.70	961.70	-12.50	...

هكذا من الأصل

Hazel Spink takes a look at the second-hand endowment market

BOB MARSHAK/POLYGRAM FILM INTERNATIONAL

Family gatherings, such as that in *Home for the Holidays*, can stretch emotions to breaking point, leading to divorce

Cash in to ease pain of holiday heartbreak

The weeks after holidays such as Christmas and Thanksgiving in the US see a rise in couples seeking divorce, their marriages strained past breaking point by the festivities. In the upheaval of a break-up, many people seek something to sell to raise cash. Often, they turn to an endowment policy, surrendering it to the insurer for a lump sum. However, because these policies are surrendered in the early years, many policyholders will not even get back what they have paid in. Every year, about £3 billion of with-profit endowment policies are cashed in, often by those facing sudden financial difficulty. Weekend Money looks at how this market works.

Q What is a traded endowment policy and what is the advantage of selling it?

A A traded endowment policy, sometimes called a second-hand endowment, is a with-profit endowment life assurance policy that the original policyholder no longer wants, and instead of surrendering it he sells it to a market-maker for more than its surrender value. The policy is then bought by an investor. The policy stays secured on the original policyholder's life, but the new investor takes over paying premiums and has all rights to proceeds of the policy.

Q Why should I consider selling my policy instead of surrendering it?

A Provided you have the right type of policy you are likely to be offered, on average, 15 per cent more than the surrender value and perhaps 30 or 35 per cent more.

Q What type of policies are marketable, and are any excluded?

A The most useful ones are with-profit endowments, but some whole of life policies can be sold in this way. Policies need to have been in force for at least five years and have a minimum surrender value of £2,000.

Q How do I set about selling my policy and finding a trader to do it?

A Perhaps the easiest way to sell a policy is to go to a specialised market-maker. A market-maker buys the policy outright for a sum higher than its surrender value. Premiums continue to be paid by the market-maker until the policy is sold to a new investor, who takes over paying premiums until maturity. A list of market-makers can be obtained from the Association of Policy Market Makers (0171-739 3949). Policies can also be sold at special auctions.

Q How do I choose a market-maker to sell my policy through?

A It is probably best to ring three market-makers for a quote and then, provided all three are regulated by the PIA and are preferably members of the Association of Policy Market Makers, you simply choose the best quote.

Q How long does it take for a market-maker to give me a quote?

A You will usually receive details of how much the market-maker will offer within 48 hours.

Q Will I have to pay any charges on the deal?

A No. The price you are quoted is the price you receive. The market-maker makes a profit by selling a policy on at a higher price.

Q Is a traded endowment a good investment?

A This is a complex question. With-profit endowment policies offer relatively low risk and fairly stable growth. Premiums are invested in a life office's with-profit fund, so peaks and troughs are smoothed out. The insurer pays an annual bonus at a rate calculated by its actuaries. The rate reflects investment conditions generally, but not directly. Once added, these bonuses cannot be taken away. A terminal bonus is added on maturity.

Q Do second-hand endowments offer good value for money?

A On the one hand, traded endowments are attractive because the original policyholder has borne the cost of setting up the policy. Furthermore, the sum assured and any bonuses accrued before you buy the policy are guaranteed. However, the level of future bonuses is not guaranteed and you need to take a view on whether the life company underwriting the policy is likely to maintain its past performance. And whether the assumptions that have been made about future levels of growth are sound.

Furthermore, you have to bear in mind that the original policyholder is getting a higher amount than the insurance company would offer and so arguably, you are ultimately paying over the odds. In defence of second-hand endowments, market-makers point out that insurance companies are renowned for offering low surrender values.

Q Is there a minimum investment?

A There is no minimum investment, but the average policy sold has a surrender value of £10,000. In addition, you have to pay the premiums until maturity. Investors who do not have this much to invest could consider gaining exposure to this market through one of a handful of investment trusts that invest in a wide range of traded endowments.

Q What sort of return can I expect to see on my investment?

A Two leading market-makers claim that their investors have seen annual returns in excess of 9 per cent. Beale Dobie reckons that of all the policies it has sold which matured in the second half of 1997 the average annualised compound growth rate was 9.79 per cent. The company points out that most investors are unlikely to pay tax on this unless they exceed the annual capital gains tax allowance. Policy Portfolio claims that the average annualised growth rate of all policies it has sold which matured in September and October of this year was 9.4 per cent.

Q How do I set about buying a traded endowment?

A You can ask market-makers to send you a list of stock they have. When choosing a policy, you need to consider factors such as the length of time to maturity and the quality of the life office. Market-makers point out that policies underwritten by lower-quality companies will be cheaper, which affects the return you make on your investment.

Market-makers calculate the prices they charge for traded endowments using fairly complex formulae. So if you feel unsure about whether a policy is fairly priced and offers good value for money it may be worth consulting a financial adviser.

Q What happens if the original policyholder dies?

A When policyholders sell a policy they relinquish all rights to it. However, the policy remains secured on the policyholder's life so if the policyholder dies, the new investor will receive all proceeds of the policy, including the basic sum assured, accrued bonuses and generally a terminal bonus.

Bond may leave you shaken and stirred

HIT OR MISS

Love at first sight, but **Gavin Lumsden** finds high-income investment from RBS carries a sting in the tail

High-income bonds linked to stock market indices have been rightly criticised in the past for disguising the risks to investors' capital. But the latest offering from the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) really takes the mickey — or should that be the Nikkei?

At first sight the five-year Royal Bank of Scotland high-income bond looks extremely attractive. Like other high-income bonds it offers investors good levels of income plus the prospect of getting back their original investment after five years.

Investors with a minimum of £5,000 can select either an annual income of 8.75 per cent, or a slightly less generous monthly income of 0.7 per cent, equivalent to 8.4 per cent a year. Alternatively, they can roll up the income and grow their capital by 55 per cent over the five years. These figures are all the more impressive because they come after 20 per cent tax has been paid by the Royal Bank of Scotland (however, as this tax cannot be reclaimed, the high-income bond and others like it are not suitable for non-taxpayers).

In other words £5,000 investors opting for monthly income can look forward to £35 every four weeks. This builds up to £2,100 after five years, giving investors a total potential return of £7,100. Annual income seekers could get even more as their yearly payments of £437.50 total £2,187.50 after five years. But, potentially, it is growth seekers who can get the most, accumulating £2,725 on top of their original investment.

However, there is a big "if" hanging over these rosy figures. The Royal Bank of Scotland will return investors' money only if both the FTSE 100, the main UK stock market index, and the Nikkei 225, its equivalent in Japan, do not fall over the next five years.

High-income bonds linked to two stock market indices have become common in recent years as banks and insurers compete with each other to offer big headline income figures to investors. However, they have been criticised for downplaying the risk to investors' capital. Effectively, investors who buy these bonds are taking two bets at once, thereby doubling their risk.

Potential investors should take particular care with the Royal Bank of Scotland bond. Betting on the UK may be OK at the moment, but Japan is definitely high-risk. The land of the rising sun has been in the perpetual sunset of recession for seven years, its financial system is weak, corrupt and indebted, while the entire economy is about to be blown further downhill by the economic crisis in South-East Asia.

Seven years ago the Nikkei 225 stood at 37,460. It is now at 16,585 and may fall further (see chart). It has risen in only four of the past ten years (February to February). Yet if the index is more than 5 per cent down by February 2003, RBS will subtract the income it has paid out from investors' capital. Customers who put in £5,000 could get back as little as £2,900 in this worst-case scenario.

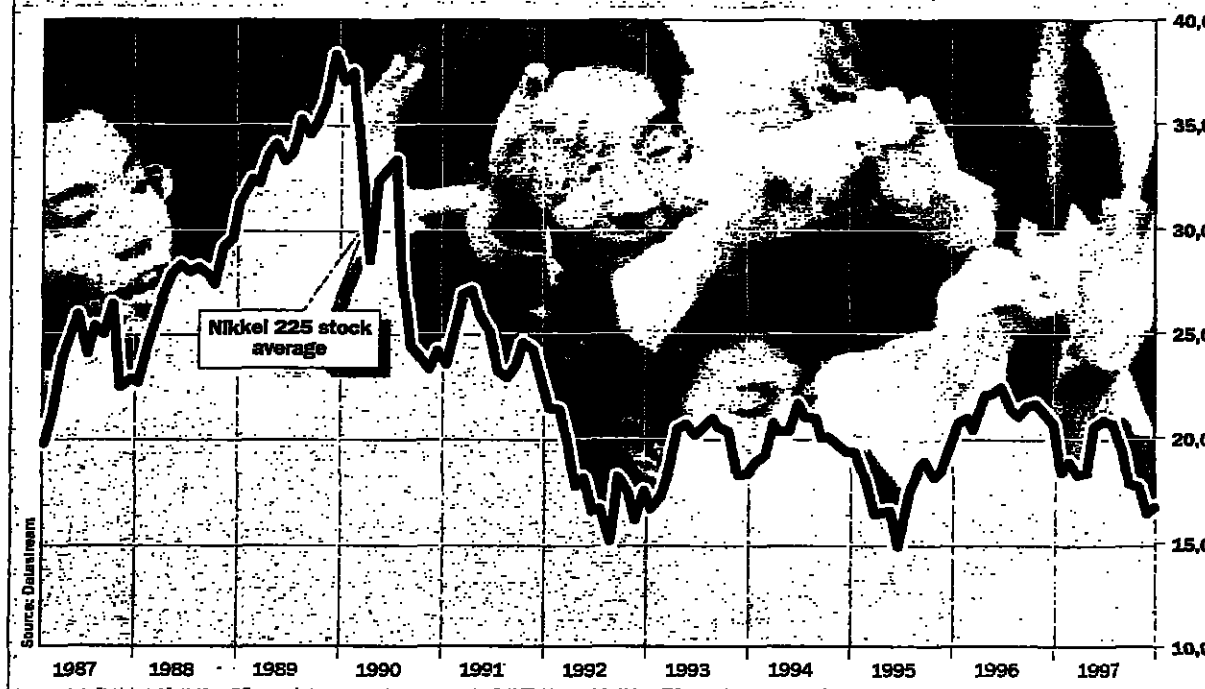
Although RBS's marketing literature is clear about the implications of either index falling over five years, it is scandalously short on details about the Japanese market. Would-be investors are effectively being asked to bet that Japan, which is undergoing an historic crisis of confidence, will right itself by 2003. RBS's view is that Japan has fallen as low as it will go and can only rise. It may do and then again it may not. Investors need information which RBS is not providing.

RBS's lack of candour is all the more alarming because it is not waiting for people to apply but is frequently targeting customers to whom the product can be sold. RBS customers have sent in £30 million a month before the deadline.

Score: ★

Graded: ★ (poor) to ★★★★★ (outstanding).

A DECADE OF DECLINE IN THE JAPANESE STOCK MARKET



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TAKING STOCK 44

Graham Searjeant on an odd year in the market

WEEKEND MONEY

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Easing the cost of Christmas break-ups

Not so prosperous new year

Changes to PRP tax relief will hit millions of employees in the pocket, says

Caroline Merrell

ADRIAN DENNIS

Harder times: the impending changes to tax relief on profit-related pay will mean that millions of people will have less to spend next Christmas

Millions of people who have enjoyed the tax-free benefits of profit-related pay (PRP) for a decade will find themselves considerably poorer in the new year as changes introduced under the last Government begin to bite.

Since 1987, profit-related pay schemes have enjoyed generous tax perks. There are now around 14,000 schemes in operation with approximately 3.7 million members. Philip Fisher, from Chantrey Vellacott, believes that around 1.5 *million* of these will be affected by the changes coming in next month. "Those hit will be members of those schemes that have an accounting period *running from January*," he said. Mr Fisher said that these people will be around 2 to 3 per cent poorer because of the change.

Under present rules, PRP paid to an employee under a scheme registered by the Inland Revenue is free of income tax in any year up to the lower of £4,000 or 20 per cent of the employee's pay in the profit period to which the PRP relates. According to the Inland Revenue, the average amount earned by people in PRP schemes is less than £1,400 a year.

The Government intends completely to abolish the tax relief on these schemes by the year 2000. The first stage of the abolition of the tax relief comes in to effect from the *beginning* of *next year*. The ceiling on tax relief will be halved to £2,000, halving the maximum benefit to higher-rate taxpayers from £1,600 to £800. A higher-rate taxpayer who earns £4,000 in PRP will be £66 a month worse off under the new rules. Someone paying the basic rate of tax and earning the full £4,000 of profit-related pay will be £38 a month worse off.

In 1999 the ceiling will be halved again to £1,000, and by the year 2000 the tax relief will be phased out altogether.

Barclays Bank, which employs a total of 66,000 people, said that a high proportion of them would be worse off next year. Alan Grant, Barclays Bank personnel executive, said: "They will begin to feel it in January." He said the biggest impact would be on those who earn £35,000 or more, adding: "Someone on this salary will be around £20 a month worse off next year."

Mr Grant pointed out that the tax relief before the change would be worth £1,049. After the change this tax relief would fall to £650. Around £159 of this extra tax would be be applied to the lump sum available under the scheme, while the rest would apply to the monthly salary. Mr Grant said that the changes to wages had been communicated to all its staff.

For those who work at Boots, the high street chemist, the impact could be even greater. More than 50,000 of the company's employees benefit from PRP. The company says that removing all the tax relief from its scheme would make the average employee £200 a year worse off, assuming an average salary of £10,000. Boots does point out that the full impact of the changes to tax relief will not be felt until the year 2000.

A Boots spokesman said: "There has been no decision to compensate employees for the tax payable. We are, however, reviewing all bonus arrange*ments and will seek to ensure* that our schemes continue to act as incentive and reward for all effective performance."

Stuart Hibberd, director of Arthur Andersen, the accountants who were one of the pioneers of PRP schemes, said: "We have seen a small number of schemes disappear. Many companies are waiting until 1999 to begin to phase the schemes out."

A survey carried out by Arthur Andersen in September showed that only 45 per cent of companies have told employees about the reduction *in* wages. The accountancy firm also found that there was still little pressure on employers to make up the difference in employees' wage packets.

Mr Fisher said the cost to employees of making up the difference could be considerable. He says the cost to a company of making up the lost wages for 5,000 workers could be nearly £11 million, assuming that 50 per cent are higher-rate taxpayers.

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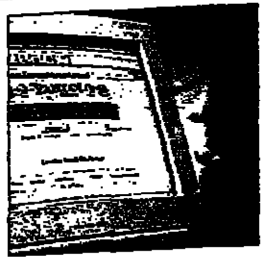

INVESTMENT

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WEEKEND MONEY
is edited by Anne Ashworth

Bank Tessas found wanting

Mutual friends: savers rallied round when deposits went missing in *It's a Wonderful Life*

Tessa savers have lost up to £500 in interest by going to a high street bank rather than shopping around, according to a survey on Tessa returns published this week. The survey, by MoneyFacts, the savings data specialist, shows that a Barclays Bank Tessa maturing on January 3, 1998, will pay out £11,099.67, £510 less than the top-of-the-table Chorley & District Building Society's Tessa.

The Barclays Tessa was 85th out of the 91 providers in the annual survey. The picture was almost as poor at other high street banks. NatWest, Lloyds and Midland are all paying out remarkably similar amounts and were ranked 72nd, 73rd and 74th in the table.

Abbey National and Halifax are both in the bottom half of the table, with only TSB among the major providers achieving a respectable payout to savers. TSB will be giving Tessa savers £11,509.46, £250 more than unlucky Tessa holders at sister company Lloyds Bank.

Stephen Bullock, chief executive of Chorley & District Building Society, says the cost of paying dividends to shareholders is why the returns from high street banks are so much lower than at his society. The three-branch Lancashire society is a mutual and aims to maximise payouts to members.

Mr Bullock said: "We are a mutual organisation and our *interest rate structure does not* have to take into account paying shareholders. It allows us to operate on a narrower interest rate margin than the big banks." The Chorley also paid out a 0.75 per cent bonus to its Tessa holders on maturity on the full value of the amount saved.

A NatWest spokesman admitted that until recently the bank set its Tessa rates to match the other high street *banks rather than offer the* best returns, explaining why returns from the major banks differ by only a few pounds.

He said: "We have now taken a conscious decision to be a lot more aggressively competitive in the Tessa market. Before that we were only comparable to the other banks; now we want to be the best in the market."

A Lloyds spokeswoman claimed the the bank's policy was to offer a "competitive" Tessa, but admitted that its aim was to be competitive only against the other high street banks.

More than four million savers have put nearly £27 billion into Tessas, and the industry is predicting a sales boom in 1998 as the April 1999 deadline for the end of tax-free Tessas and the start of individual savings accounts (Isas) approaches. Nearly 400,000 Tessas opened in 1993 will mature during 1998, while many other people who have not taken advantage of their tax-free allowances will be looking for a Tessa before the tax drawbridge is raised.

Isas will offer only £1,000 a year in tax-free savings, much less than the £9,000 that can be put into a Tessa over a five-year period. But until April 1999 savers can still open a Tessa and benefit from tax-free savings for the next five years. When the Tessa matures, savers will be allowed to transfer their capital (a maximum of £9,000) into an Isa, although the interest accumulated will not be transferrable.

First-time Tessa buyers can put a maximum of £3,000 into a Tessa in its first year, £1,800 in each of the second, third and fourth years and £600 in the final year. But anyone who touches their capital in the five-year period will lose their tax-free rights.

The MoneyFacts survey underlines the importance of shopping around for the best Tessa rate. *The Times* carries a listing of the best rates currently on offer (see page 46). Savers can choose between a fixed or a variable *interest rate, depending on* whether they think rates are likely to rise or fall.

NatWest is keeping to its pledge to be the best in the market, offering the highest fixed rate of 7.45 per cent. "You can no longer criticise us for lack of competitiveness," said a spokesman. However, variable rates are currently higher. The best rates on offer are from Melton Mowbray Building Society and Sun Banking Corporation at 7.9 per cent and 7.85 per cent respectively.

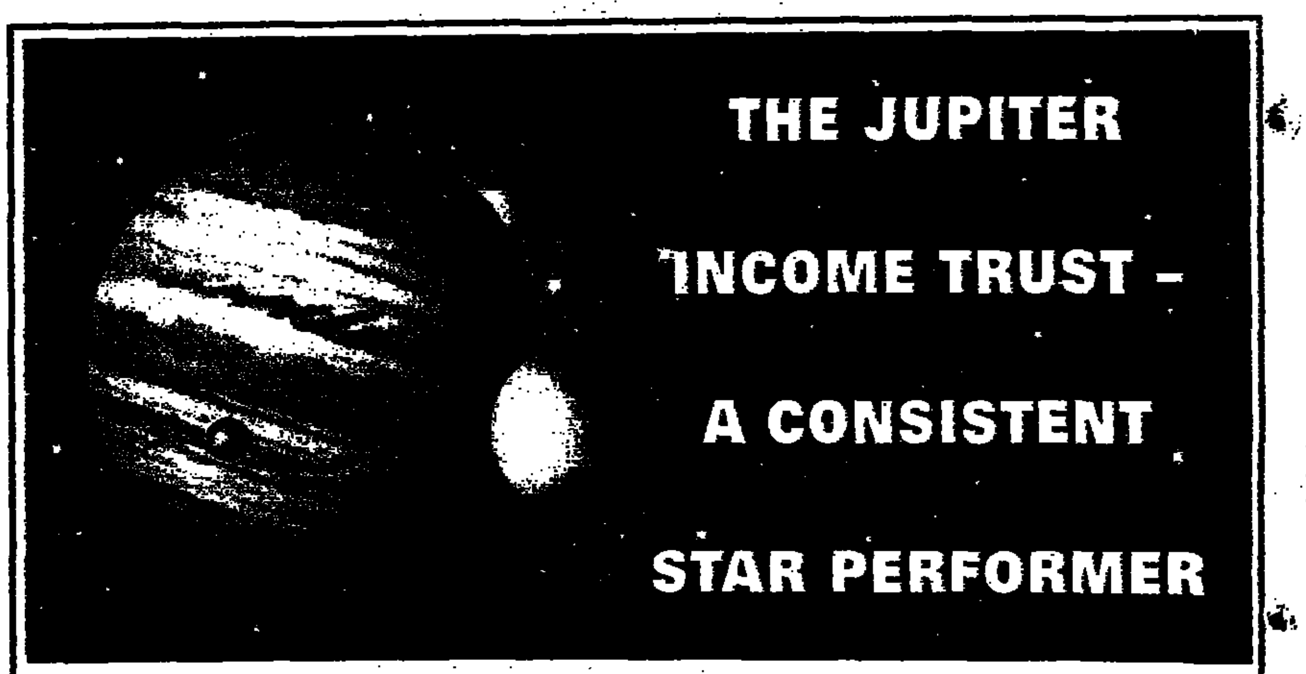
A year ago the position was reversed, with fixed rates better than variable rates.

PATRICK COLLINSON

TESSA LEADERS AND LAGGARDS

RANK/PROVIDER	VALUE
1) Chorley & District BS	£11,610
2) Julian Hodge Bank	£11,600
3) Investec Bank (UK)	£11,593
4) Norwich & Peterborough BS	£11,578
5) Buckinghamshire BS	£11,565
46) Abbey National	£11,382
55) Halifax (Gold)	£11,354
72) NatWest	£11,248
73) Lloyds	£11,247
74) Midland	£11,231
85) Barclays	£11,099

Source: MoneyFacts. Projected maturity value of variable-rate first Tessas as at January 3 1998, assuming the Tessa was opened on January 4, 1993, with the maximum investment of £3,000 and maximum contributions made on each anniversary.



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M&G Income	+135%	+55%	+13%

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